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ABSTRACT

This bulletin contains on-statutory guidance describing good practice and its implications for boarding accommodation to assist those responsible for briefing and designing boarding accommodations across all school sectors. It offers practical advice and illustrates examples that reflect changes in provision which are thought to be acceptable and appropriate. Issues include the growing concern about children's welfare, both pastorally and physically; trends toward a more home-like environment including semi-private spaces that each child can personalize; and the changing population in special schools for which many buildings no longer make adequate provision. The concluding section presents a check list for briefing and designing boarding accommodations that include specifics on site planning, boarding house organization, main and ancillary accommodations, special educational needs, furnishings and fittings, environmental design, and health and safety. (Contains 31 references.) (GR)

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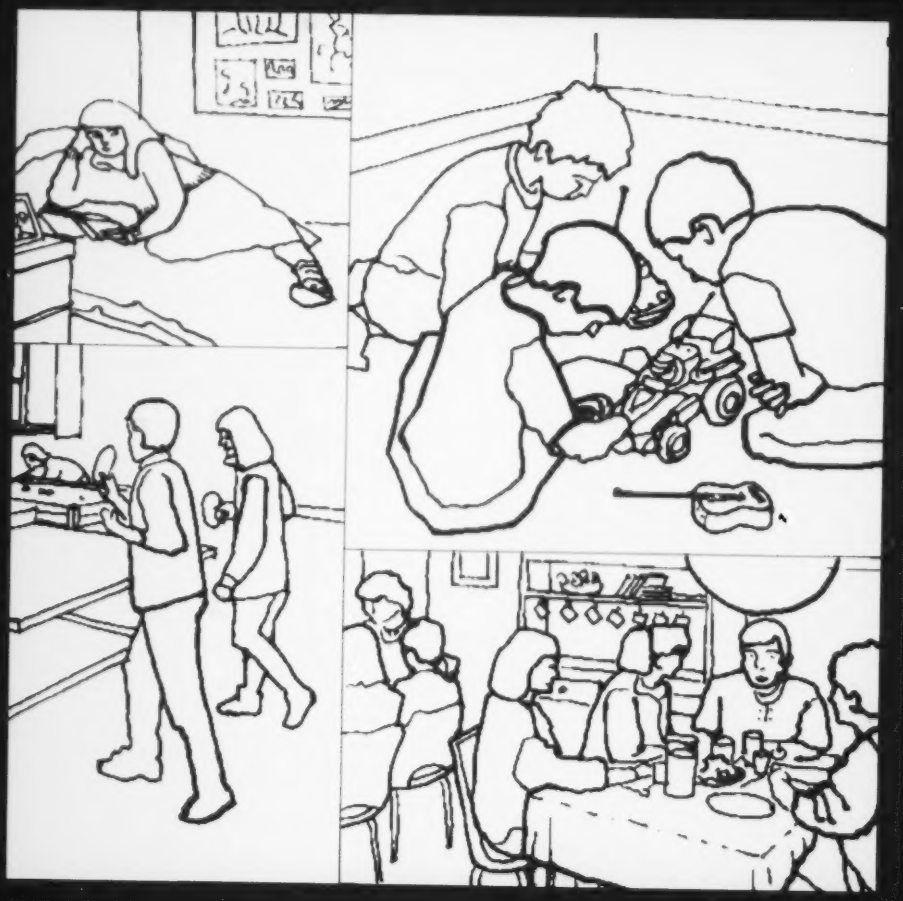
BOARDING ACCOMMODATION

A Design Guide



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School Boarding Accommodation

A Design Guide

Architects and Building Branch
Department for Education and Employment

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Introduction and Background

The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1996 (SPRs) set out minimum standards for boarding accommodation. This Bulletin contains non-statutory guidance describing good practice and its implications for accommodation. It should help those responsible for briefing and designing boarding accommodation across all school sectors to make well informed decisions.

The extent to which providers follow the advice contained in this bulletin will, of course, depend on the particular circumstances of the school concerned, the relative priorities of the provider and the level of available resources.

This publication starts by describing the current situation in Section 1. It then goes on, in Section 2, to describe good practice and the broad implications of this for accommodation. Section 3 discusses the planning and design of boarding accommodation. It looks at provision for sleeping, for social recreation and study and ancillary accommodation. This is followed, in Section 4, by a description of the additional requirements of boarders with special educational needs. Section 5 looks at various technical considerations and Sections 6 & 7 discuss resources and briefing for boarding accommodation.

It is based on an investigation carried out in 1993 and early 1994. A small team from Architects and Building Branch (A&B) of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), advised by and sometimes in conjunction with, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), visited some 20 schools representing a wide range of boarding provision, and two residential homes for young people. The purpose of these visits was to talk to staff and boarders, to see the accommodation they used and to observe it in use. Analysis and planning studies were carried out in parallel with the visits.

The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1996

The SPRs apply to all Local Education Authority (LEA) - maintained, grant-maintained (GM) and grant-maintained special schools. By virtue of the Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994, non-maintained special schools must comply with aspects of the SPRs. By virtue of the Education (Special Educational Needs) (Approval of Independent Schools) Regulations 1994, the SPRs also have implications for those independent schools approved to admit pupils who have statements of special educational needs (SEN).

Although the Regulations do not have statutory force in those independent schools which are not approved to admit pupils who have SEN statements, OFSTED does use the Regulations as a benchmark for its inspections of them. These schools may therefore wish to make use of this guidance.

Part III of the SPRs sets out minimum standards for boarding accommodation and Part IV sets out minimum requirements in respect of structure. They apply at all times, not just when a school is being designed.

In practice, consideration of boarding accommodation is a complex matter covering provision for those in mainstream boarding schools and residential special schools, with children boarding from as little as one night a week to 52 weeks a year. While the Regulations set minimum standards, this non-statuory guidance provides advice on how to address the needs of this wide ranging group.

The Children Act 1989

This Act brings together, in a single coherent legislative framework, the private and public law regarding children, thereby strengthening the legal framework for their welfare. The standards in the SPRs are referred to in Volume 5 of the Guidance and Regulations on Independent Schools (para 3.4.3) issued under Section 87 of the Children Act and addressed to Social Services Departments

(SSDs) and proprietors of independent schools with boarders. Whilst the requirements of section 87 do not apply directly to maintained schools, those working in the field look for comparability across all sectors.

The Children Act aims to strike a balance between the rights of children to express their views on decisions made about their lives, the right of parents to exercise their responsibilities towards the child and the duty of the State to intervene where the child's welfare requires it. Independent schools with boarders have a duty placed upon them by Section 87 of the Children Act to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children accommodated in their schools. It gives them a continuous welfare duty for each boarding pupil. Local Authority Social Services Departments also have a duty to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to enable them to determine whether proprietors are adequately carrying out their welfare duty.

The term "safeguarding and promoting welfare" gives the schools a duty not only to provide a safe and caring environment but also to be proactive in promoting the welfare of boarders. The Act refers to the child or pupil in the singular not in the plural, thus emphasising the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of each individual. A boarding school has, therefore, to take special steps or make special provision for the pupil who for some reason does not readily fit into the school.

Independent schools which accommodate or intend to accommodate four or more pupils, for more than 295 days a year, are required to register as childrens' homes under Section 63 of the Children Act and are subject to the more stringent care requirements of "Residential Care", Volume 4 of the Children Act Guidance and Regulations. Such schools are subject to the Children (Homes, Arrangements for Placement Review and Representation) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 1993, explained in Department of Health (DH) Circular LAC(93)24.

Inspection

Boarding accommodation is subject to inspection by OFSTED and SSDs. The frequency of inspection and the inspecting body vary with the type of boarding school.

Independent boarding schools are inspected by HMI from OFSTED as part of the statutory registration process. HMI advise DfEE whether new schools are suitable for registration and monitor registered schools to see if they should continue to be registered. In addition, OFSTED organise some reporting inspections in order to inform themselves about standards in independent schools. Independent boarding schools are also inspected by SSD inspection teams as part of their duties under Section 87 of the Children Act. As well as inspecting independent schools, SSDs may monitor the welfare of borders at non-maintained special schools under Section 62 of the Children Act.

Independent schools approved under the 1993 Education Act, non-maintained special schools and all maintained special schools, are subject to regular inspection by OFSTED under the Education (Schools) Act 1992.

Section 1: The Current Situation

There are many different reasons why pupils attend boarding schools. In some cases it is a preference for boarding, perhaps because of family tradition, or the wish for independent education in a home area where there is little choice of independent day schools.

1.1 In other cases it is a combination of circumstance and choice. Examples include the need to provide educational continuity for the children of parents whose work involves frequent moves abroad, as is the case with the armed forces, the diplomatic service or multi-national companies. In the case of the armed forces, Ministry of Defence boarding allowances may encourage parents to consider this option.

1.2 For children with a special talent their need may best be met by a specialist boarding school, such as a choir school or one with a particular emphasis on art or sport. Parents belonging to a particular religious or denominational group, or who have a particular philos-ophical stance, may also send their children to compatible boarding schools when such day school provision is not available locally. Some parents, for example those who live in isolated areas, consider boarding in order to increase their child's opportunities to make friends and have a wider social experience.

1.3 Boarding is also sought by families where both parents hold demanding jobs and see weekly boarding as an arrangement which allows them to enjoy the company of their children at weekends, and the proportion who board weekly rather than full-term is increasing. This trend towards weekly boarding is increasing in the 8-12 age range where parents living within, say, a 50 mile radius choose weekly boarding. This enables children to go home every week, and parents to participate in the life of the school, for example, by attending plays and concerts. Other family circumstances that may lead to boarding include separation, divorce, illness or bereavement.

1.4 A significant number of girls now attend what were previously traditional boys' independent boarding schools. In some cases this is in the sixth form only but, increasingly also lower down the school. This has occurred largely for economic reasons in what is currently a declining market for boarding, but in many schools it is seen as having educational and social advantages. It also provides a convenient arrangement where there are both boys and girls in the same family.

1.5 There has always been a small number of parents of other nationalities who favour a British education, and seek opportunities for their children to improve or perfect their English. The number has been growing in recent years. This has increased the range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds at boarding schools, and has some implications for the design and management of boarding accommodation.

1.6 Another group of pupils increasing in number in independent boarding schools is those with a degree of special educational need, not necessarily sufficient to justify a statement of educational need under the 1993 Education Act. These are often children with specific learning difficulties (eg dyslexia).

1.7 Some pupils with SEN statements have boarding provision specified in their statements. This may be because of a need for 24-hour consistency in the management of their education; where day arrangements have proved or are anticipated to be insufficient; where home circumstances cannot support their education; or where training and support beyond the classroom curriculum is needed. In addition some pupils have health problems which interfere with successful day education because of the likelihood of absence from school. A significant number of pupils have such severe and challenging behaviour that parents may find that residential arrangements prove necessary.

1.8 A further group of boarders with special educational needs are those who might, in the past, have coped with a day special school whilst living in a Local Authority residential unit for children. Boarding education for such pupils may be funded jointly by LEAs and SSDs, and they are often among those for whom 52-week boarding is provided.

1.9 Some residential special schools are finding that the degree of impairment or difficulty in their populations has become more severe and complex over recent years. This is because medical advances have resulted in the survival of children with complex difficulties, and because provision for less severe special needs is now generally available in maintained day schools, both special and mainstream.

1.10 Although the majority of boarding schools are independent, there are over forty mainstream boarding schools in the maintained sector. Maintained boarding schools fulfil an important need in their own right insofar as they widen the opportunities for boarding to a broader range of children. Parents pay only for board and lodging. Education, as in all LEA and GM schools, is free.

Expectations of Accommodation

1.11 The boarding population has changed significantly in recent years and many parents today have expectations which differ from those in the past. In many schools the majority of boarders are the first in their family to board. In special schools the majority of pupils has always been unlikely to have either a family tradition or an expectation of boarding. Indeed, many parents may have agreed only reluctantly to boarding arrangements for their child. Schools therefore can no longer assume that the majority of their boarders were brought up expecting to board, nor that they would be familiar with the boarding way of life.

1.12 The parents of today seek higher standards of accommodation and comfort than in the past, with an atmosphere more comparable with home. Many boarding schools are reviewing their boarding accommodation in order to meet these expectations and to maintain numbers, and regard improvement as a high priority.

1.13 A recent wide ranging and full survey by Oxfordshire SSD sought views and comments from boarders on their experience of boarding school life. Pupils' Views on Boarding published by the DH (see Bibliography) describes the findings and highlights the importance placed on accommodation.

1.14 Many boarding schools let their accommodation, including boarding houses, for holiday and conference use in the school holidays. This may be a consideration when remodelling boarding accommodation or building new. Higher standards are thus achieved. The provision of single study bedrooms with a wash-hand basin is a typical example.

The boarding house or unit is a boarder's home for the time they board, whether for a few nights a week in term time or 52 weeks a year. Even a few nights a week is a significant proportion of the year, and many will be there for a number of their formative years. This should be reflected in the environment provided and the way it is managed.

2.1 All children in residential situations have a right to privacy and dignity. They should also have opportunities to exercise independence and choice in accommodation that promotes and safeguards their welfare and which allows fulfilment of personal expectations and abilities.

2.2 Safeguarding welfare includes protection from bullying and from abuse. Careful design can reduce opportunities for bullying and other forms of abuse, for example by avoiding poorly supervised and isolated areas or access points. However, responsibility for ensuring that such behaviour does not occur rests with those in charge.

General Principles

2.3 Many approaches are possible, both in the organisation of boarding and in the environment provided. The family model with small houses or units of four to ten contrasts with the communal living model. The latter is significantly different from home and is likely to have groups of between twenty and sixty (see Figs 2.1 and 2.2). Both have implications for staff numbers and their role. In the family model they will be central, in the communal model they may be more peripheral. Between these two models there is a variety of approaches.

2.4 Sometimes arrangements result from the arrangement of existing accommodation. On occasions this gives rise to significant differences in provision and opportunity between groups of boarders or houses within one school. Where this is the case the school may need to take measures to avoid perceptions of inequality in provision and practice.

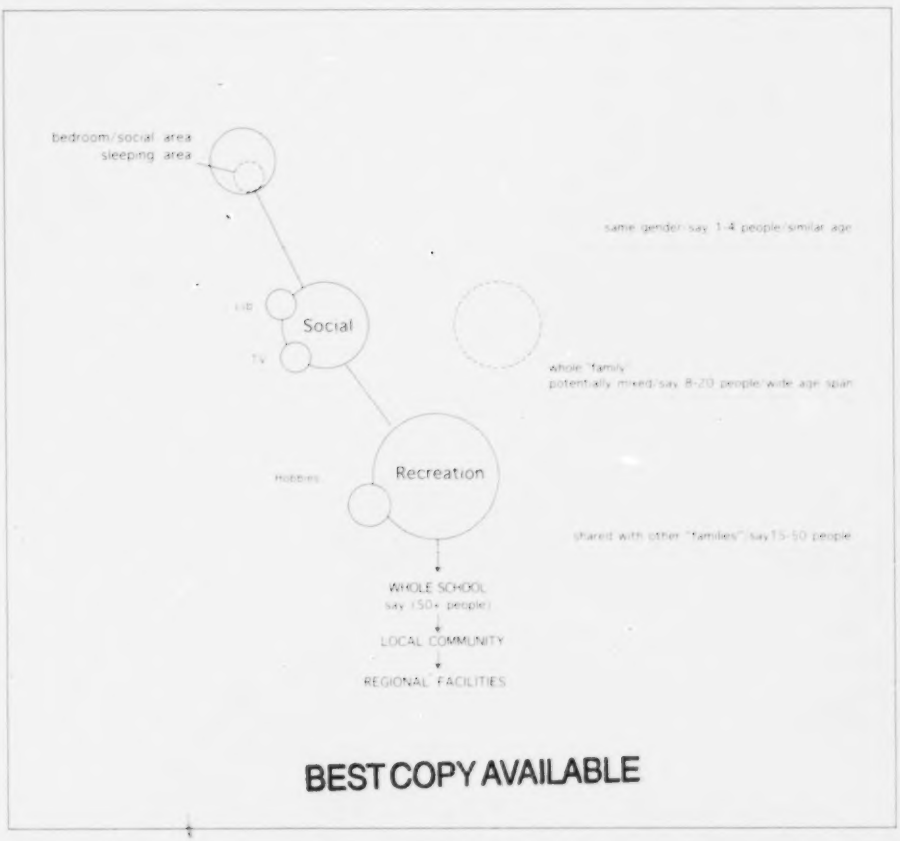

Fig 2.1
Analysis of family model
This shows the progression from personal space within a small, same age, same gender group through a larger family group, groups of families, the whole school to the wider community. It demonstrates how, with small scale provison, it may not be possible to provide dedicated spaces for certain activities and there may need to be some sharing of provision.

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2.5 The family model is often associated with special schools or small schools. Because of the small scale it may be more difficult to justify dedicated spaces for a wide range of activities for all the ages present. As in a family home, compromises in the use of spaces may be necessary. However, this arrangement provides a small scale and intimate environment.

2.6 The large boarding house, with boarders in age-related groups, allows for a wider range of dedicated spaces and for the accommodation to be more age appropriate, but within a more communal living environment. Ways of breaking down into smaller groups with their own sense of identity might be considered.

2.7 Very young boarders, say eight and under, may need to be cared for with higher care staff ratios and smaller groups. They may have different daily routines than older boarders with much more personal attention.

Privacy versus Supervision

2.8 Whatever the size and ethos of the boarding house the need for both privacy and supervision remains. There are, however, inherent tensions between these two aspects. Everyone has a need to be alone sometimes because of mood or a particular stress. Two or three people should be able to gather together for a private talk, so space for this needs to be available. However, responsibility for caring should include adequate supervision to protect the boarder's welfare. Isolated areas, corners and rooms are difficult to supervise. They increase the opportunity for bullying and abuse, and can leave staff, as well as boarders, vulnerable. School grounds can provide a welcome opportunity for privacy, but can also present supervision difficulties. The balance needs to be weighed towards ease of observation while allowing for children to talk to each other in privacy.

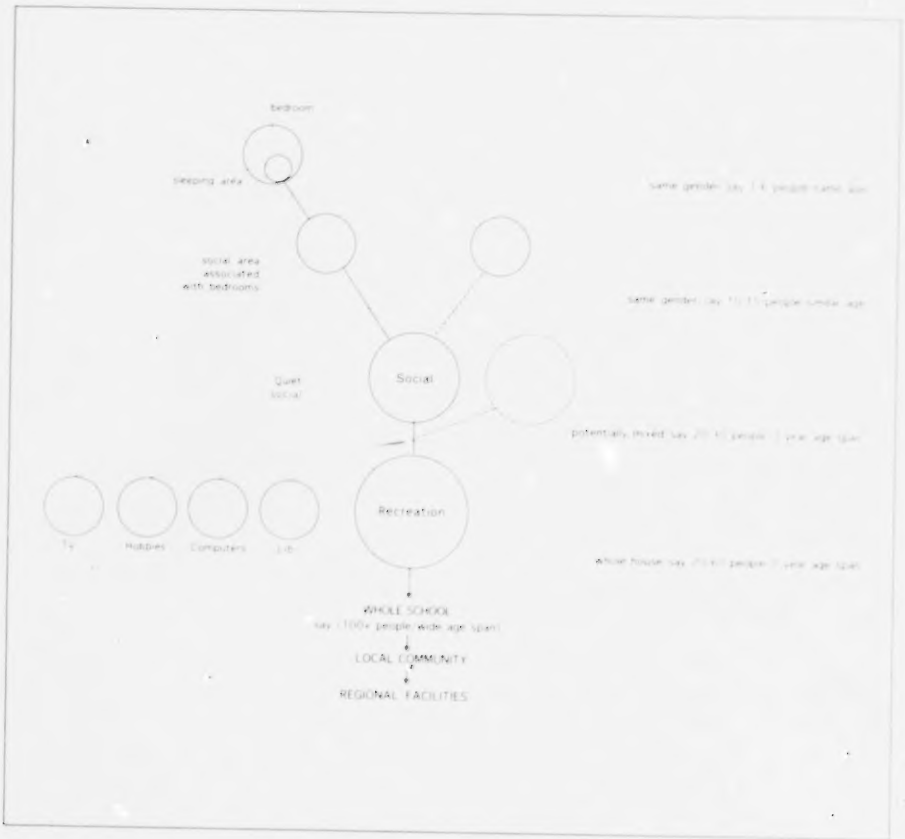

Fig 2.2
Analysis of communal model
As in 2.1 this shows the progression from personal space within a small same age, same gender group to the wider community. It demonstrates how, with a larger home group, there is the possiblity of more dedicated spaces.

Sleeping

2.9 Although group sizes for living may derive from the school philosophy, or from accommodation limitations, there are important age-related developmental factors. The youngest children (those under eight) need to have some continuity with their experience of home life, with the accommodation having features similar to those at home. A child of this age is less likely to make friends easily if isolated in a single room, or introduced to a large dormitory setting. Therefore, for children under 8, the preferred group size may be two to four, with any children under 5 in rooms for two.

2.10 For rising 8 and above, when friendship groups tend to be larger, a group of four to six may be appropriate. Developmentally, a greater degree of privacy may be preferable for boarders of 13 upwards, and study-bedrooms of two to four can work well. At 16+ double or single study-bedrooms may be appropriate, in order to allow for increasing privacy and more intensive study.

2.11 All boarders should have the opportunity of making their sleeping area personal by displaying photographs or posters, and with toys or mascots and plants if they wish (see Fig 2.3). Wall surfaces with suitable finish or pinboards can make a valuable contribution here. Where circumstances permit and within acceptable limits, they could be encouraged to choose the arrangement of the furniture. It is good practice for boarders to be allowed to use their bedrooms when they are in the boarding house.

2.12 Bedrooms and access to them should be suitably separate for different age groups and genders. Boarders' sleeping areas are personal to them and the room belongs to those sleeping in it. Boarders should not have to share their bedrooms and associated social and study facilities with day pupils. Visitors to bedrooms, other than an adult in a supervisory or pastoral role, should only be permitted by agreement with other occupants.

Fig 2.3
Personalisation of sleeping area
Sketch showing display, room for personal storage, reading lamp, plant and toys.

2.13 Some space for socialising in bedrooms or adjacent to them may also be provided. The provision of such space allows for a bedtime story and hot drink after bathtime for the younger children, and for older boarders a cosy place to unwind and chat. It can also provide a quiet space exclusive to one gender.

2.14 Associating this space with the respective single gender sleeping accommodation ensures it is available to them throughout the evening, including after bath time. With bedrooms for the larger sleeping groups of four to six for 5-12 year olds, it is suggested the space might be accommodated within the bedroom. When double and single rooms are provided there is unlikely to be sufficient room for a group of any size to gather within the bedrooms and a small social area adjacent to bedrooms allows boarders to get together at the end of the day.

2.15 When providing space for day pupils in a boarding context, the needs both of day pupils to feel integrated into the organisational structure, and of boarding pupils to have their privacy protected, should be considered.

Social, Recreation and Study Activities

2.16 Opportunities for relaxation are an important part of boarding life. The amount of free time spent in the house will vary with age, the amount of study, the number of nights a week, and weeks a year a boarder is at the school. Social and recreation activities complement the structured day, and offer opportunities for learning and social development. A wide variety of age-appropriate activities can be important, particularly for those who are resident for significant periods of time.

2.17 There should be a choice and a variety of social and recreational activities for all boarders. The range should be from being able to 'hang out', see what's going on and meet friends, to more focused social and recreational activities. There will be quiet sitting activities, such as reading or playing card games, and more physically active pastimes such as ping pong, pool and table football. More practical projects such as making models may suit some children. Younger children often use the floor or larger tables for model making, jigsaw puzzles and other practical activities. Books - both reference and fiction, and magazines and newspapers should be available and access to information technology (IT) to match likely opportunities at home is desirable. Watching TV, particularly the daily news, as well as weekend videos can also be an important part of boarding life.

2.18 There should also be the possibility of being alone, in pairs or in a group. The opportunities for being alone, for a quiet private conversation with a friend or friends, an older boarder, or a member of staff are of the utmost importance in boarding life. These may arise spontaneously or be actively sought. The accommodation should allow for this in an appropriate way. This means in privacy but not in a way that this privacy could be abused, e.g. not located in an isolated area.

2.19 Whether a boarding house is exclusively for male pupils, exclusively for female pupils or is mixed, there should be a quiet place where both sexes may mix socially. It is also important to ensure that some quiet social space is available to each gender for their exclusive use. The social and recreation needs of any day pupils attending an extended day (i.e. coming in for breakfast and staying for the evening meal) will also need to be considered.

2.20 Outdoor social and recreation activities are also an important part of boarding life, particularly at weekends, and should be available. As with the indoor accommodation there may be inherited limitations. However the school site is likely to provide opportunities for sport and a garden associated with a boarding house can allow for a range of social activities similar to that which might be provided in a family home.

2.21 This would provide opportunities for individual activities such as reading in seclusion close to supervision, and for small group activities such as chatting, play and informal games. Play for younger children might include den building and the use of swings and climbing frames under appropriate supervision. Gathering in larger groups, for example for house or interhouse social events such as barbecues, would also be possible. A garden might also allow for boarders to have their own plots and for pets and animals to be kept, if wished. If the house policy is to allow pets to be kept, space for this and appropriate hygienic measures will need to be considered. Figs 2.4 and 2.5 show outdoor recreation activities.

2.22 Depending on the relationship of the boarding house to the main school, it may be possible to provide a wider range of recreational activities. Photography, cooking, use of IT facilities and workshops, astronomy, dancing and drama (particularly in various clubs and societies) and the use of the school library for quieter activities can be made possible by the use of the main school building.

2.23 The school site is likely to offer opportunities for recreation including the use of facilities provided to support the formal curriculum. The latter might include team games, tennis, and jogging. It could be a suitable environment for outdoor pursuits such as scouting and individual interests in nature observation.

2.24 In addition to opportunities offered on the school campus, there may be a range of activities within the local community, such as a youth club, sports clubs and societies and specialist evening classes. There may also be organised outings, for example, to the theatre, concerts, ice rink, cinema and for meals.

Fig 2.4
Boarders gardening
A group of younger boarders, with an adult presence, gardening.

Fig 2.5
Socializing outside
A group of older boarders and adult having a barbeque.

2.25 The school may also organise week-end outings of various kinds to local places of interest and to residential centres. This can have a particular relevance for boarders with special educational needs as it gives an opportunity to further widen their life skills.

2.26 Boarders should be able to study in a way appropriate to their age and need. During prep time younger children may need to be supervised whilst older boarders might be more indirectly supervised, for example in study-bedrooms. Although the youngest pupils may not have homework, they nevertheless need an area where they can write and draw, ideally with access to books.

2.27 There might be provision for boarders to prepare hot drinks and simple snacks in suitable accommodation, under appropriate supervision. Kitchenettes are often provided. Members of ethnic minorities may need special consideration, as they may wish to prepare traditional or festive dishes for special occasions. There should be access to a hygienic source of drinking water in the house.

Personal Care

2.28 Arrangements for personal care should provide appropriate privacy and hygiene. WCs, baths and showers should be individual, i.e. never with two or more WCs, baths and showers in the same room or cubicle. Partitions and doors should be full height and doors should be lockable. Large communal house showers are not satisfactory provision for use in association with personal washing. When using bath and showers there should be room to undress and store clothes in privacy. There should be provision to wash hair and to dry it.

2.29 It should be possible for older children to wash and iron small items of their clothing. Sensitive arrangements for dealing with wet and soiled bedding are necessary, and girls should be able to dispose of sanitary towels without embarrassment.

2.30 Where there are boarders from a particular cultural or religious background there may be need to provide washing and sanitary arrangements to facilitate their religious or cultural traditions.

The guidance in this section describes provision for meeting the good practice set out in Section 2 and should be read in conjunction with it. It is primarily intended for those briefing and planning new projects, but it is also relevant to the conversion and remodelling of existing buildings.

Sleeping Accommodation

3.1 The activities that take place here are:

- sleeping
- dressing and undressing
- personal care
- having time alone
- having private conversations
- socializing with one or two friends
- reading
- studying
- storing personal belongings

Figs 3.1-3.3 illustrate some of these activities.

3.2 The ideal arrangement, whether in a single room or a bed space in a shared room, is a rectangular space in proportion not far off a square. This should contain a bed, a bedside cabinet, a chair and clothes storage, both hanging and on shelves or in drawers. There should be shelves for books and other personal belongings, pinboard, a mirror and an adjustable light or lights for the work surface and to allow for reading in bed. There should also be some lockable storage for private personal belongings, e.g. letters. Fig 3.4 shows the ingredients of a sleeping area. Where a room is shared with more than one other person, the furnishing should identify private territory associated with each personal space and provide a degree of privacy to each sleeping area.

3.3 The area of a bed space is mainly dependent on three things. These are the size of the bed, the size of worktop required, and the amount of clothes storage needed. All are age related. If a wash-hand basin is provided space for this will need to be taken into account.

Fig 3.1
Reading in a bedroom
A boarder having some time alone in surroundings that can be personalised.

Fig 3.2
Socializing in a bedroom
A group of younger boarders playing on the floor.

Fig 3.3
Studying in a bedroom
Note generous storage and long arm reading lamp.

3.4 A standard bed of 2.0 x 0.9m might be provided. For under 8s, a shorter bed with a width of 0.75m may be acceptable. As the average height of the population is increasing, some older boarders may be over 1.8m tall and thus find the standard length bed irksome. Where this is the case, consideration might be given to making extra long beds available. Positioning beds away from windows can avoid draughts and make windows easier to open and close.

3.5 It is sensible for boarders to have a worktop of the same kind for writing and drawing in their bedroom. This could also be used for study, depending on how the house organised this. For the under 8s a shared table may be preferred.
For over 8s it could be either an individual table of 0.6m square or a larger shared table of 0.9m square in a central position in the room. At 11, in order to accommodate the increase in size, and for the growing importance of study, the worktop might be 0.6 x 0.9m. At 13+ a large area, say 0.6 x 1.2m may be needed to accommodate the greater amount of reference and other material. In study bedrooms for 16+ the size should ideally be 0.6 x 1.5m. If computers are used in bedrooms, space for an additional worktop of an appropriate size and height with safe cable runs and a suitable adjustable chair should be provided. When used for study, additional shelves for storing books and other study materials may be needed.

3.6 Careful thought needs to be given to providing sufficient and appropriate storage for clothes and personal belongings, including a small amount of lockable storage for items such as letters, adjacent to each bed. Hanging space and drawers or shelves are needed for clothes. How much will depend on how frequently boarders return home, and it will need to increase with the boarders' age and size. Figs 3.5-3.10 include a wardrobe of 0.6 x 0.6m increasing to 0.6 x 0.9m at 11 years old.

3.7 Shelves and a bedside cabinet should be provided for personal belongings. A lockable section in the bedside cabinet is a

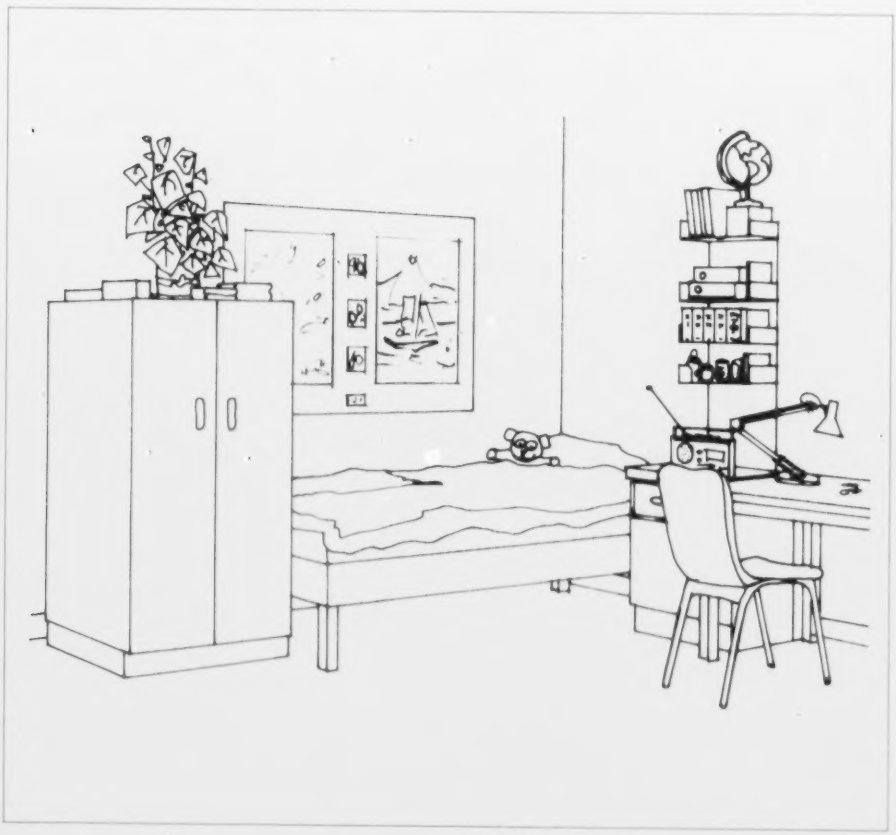

Fig 3.4
The ingredients of a sleeping area
This shows bed, bedside cabinet, worktop and chair, pinboard, shelves, clothes storage and reading lamp.

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sensible way of providing some secure storage for things like letters. There might be provision for pinboards or some other surface for displaying photographs and posters.

3.8 The SPRs set out minimum areas for sleeping accommodation by type and by number of occupants. These standards only allow for a minimum provision, i.e. bed, bedside cabinet, wardrobe and chair, per boarder. They assume purpose-built accommodation with rooms of the optimum proportion for the layout of furniture in them. The optimum proportion may not always be achievable because of constraints imposed when dealing with an existing building. The minimum standards do not allow for a worktop for writing and study, or for more clothes' storage as boarders become older. In addition, in shared rooms it may be difficult to meet the standards of personal space and privacy now regarded by some as desirable. All these factors have implications for the space required.

3.9 Planning studies (Figs 3.5-3.10) show a range of possible bedroom layouts for various ages and group sizes and indicate that, if it is wished to meet all the above criteria, an area of around 6m² is likely to be needed for boarders up to 7. Because of the increase in provision and their size, something in the range of 7.5-11.0m², is likely to be desirable for older boarders. The actual area will depend on size of sleeping group, the extent and arrangement of worktops and computer tables and whether wash-hand basins are provided. These figures assume that the rooms are of the optimum proportion (which is only likely to be possible when in a new building). In order not to reduce the availability of the worktop the use of a computer in a bedroom may warrant a dedicated table. This may require some additional area.

3.10 These planning studies are not intended to be used as they stand. Their purpose is to facilitate discussion about what is provided and to enable well informed decisions to be made.

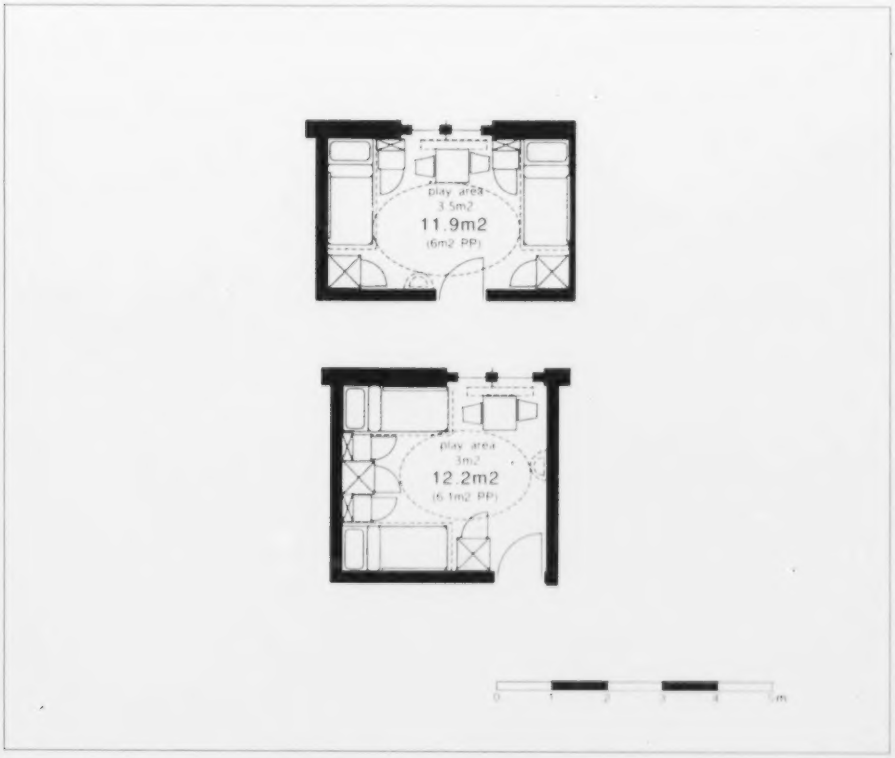

Fig 3.5
Plans of bedrooms for two under-5s
As well as beds, wardrobe and bedside cabinets and, in one case, a wash-hand basin; these plans show a shared table with chairs, pinboard, shelves and indicate an area that can be used for playing on the floor.

Fig 3.6
Plans of bedrooms for four 5-7 year olds
As with Fig 3.5 these have a shared table with chairs, pinboard, shelves and indicate an area for playing on the floor as well as bed, wardrobe and bedside table. In two cases a wash-hand basin is shown.

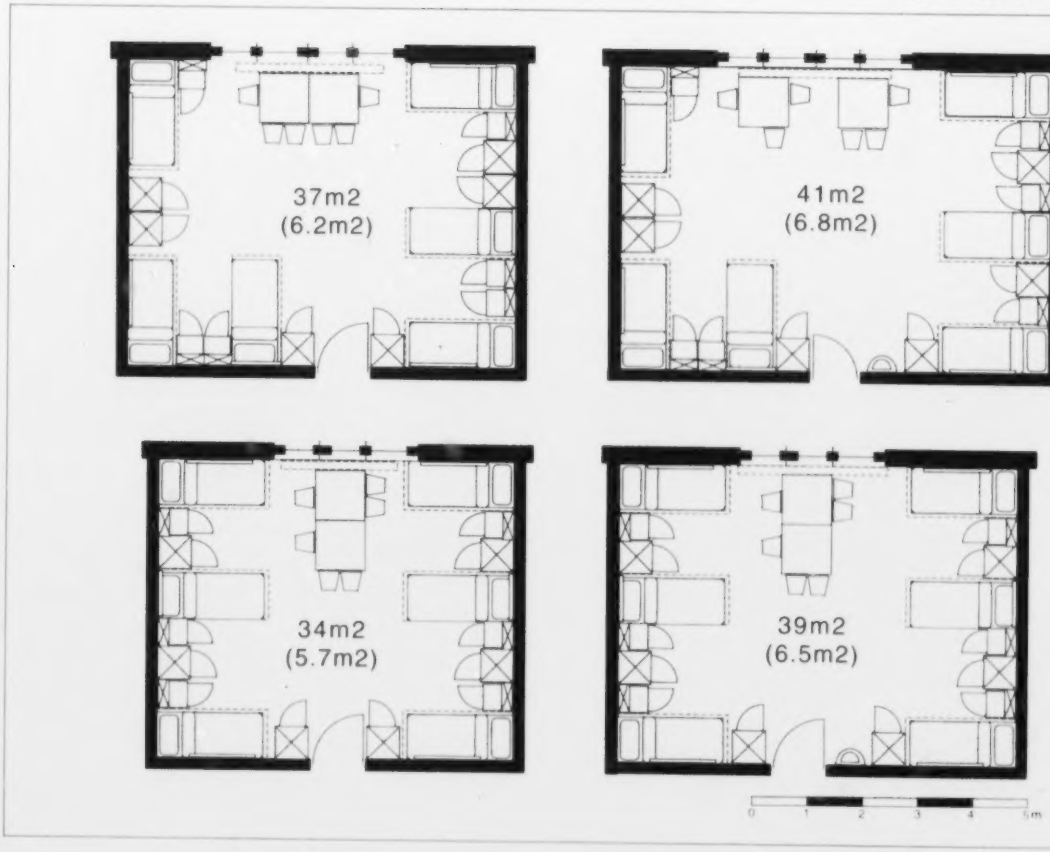

Fig 3.7
Plans of bedrooms for six 8-10 year olds
As well as beds, wardrobes, bedside tables and, in two cases wash-hand basins these show shared tables with chairs, shelves, pinboard.

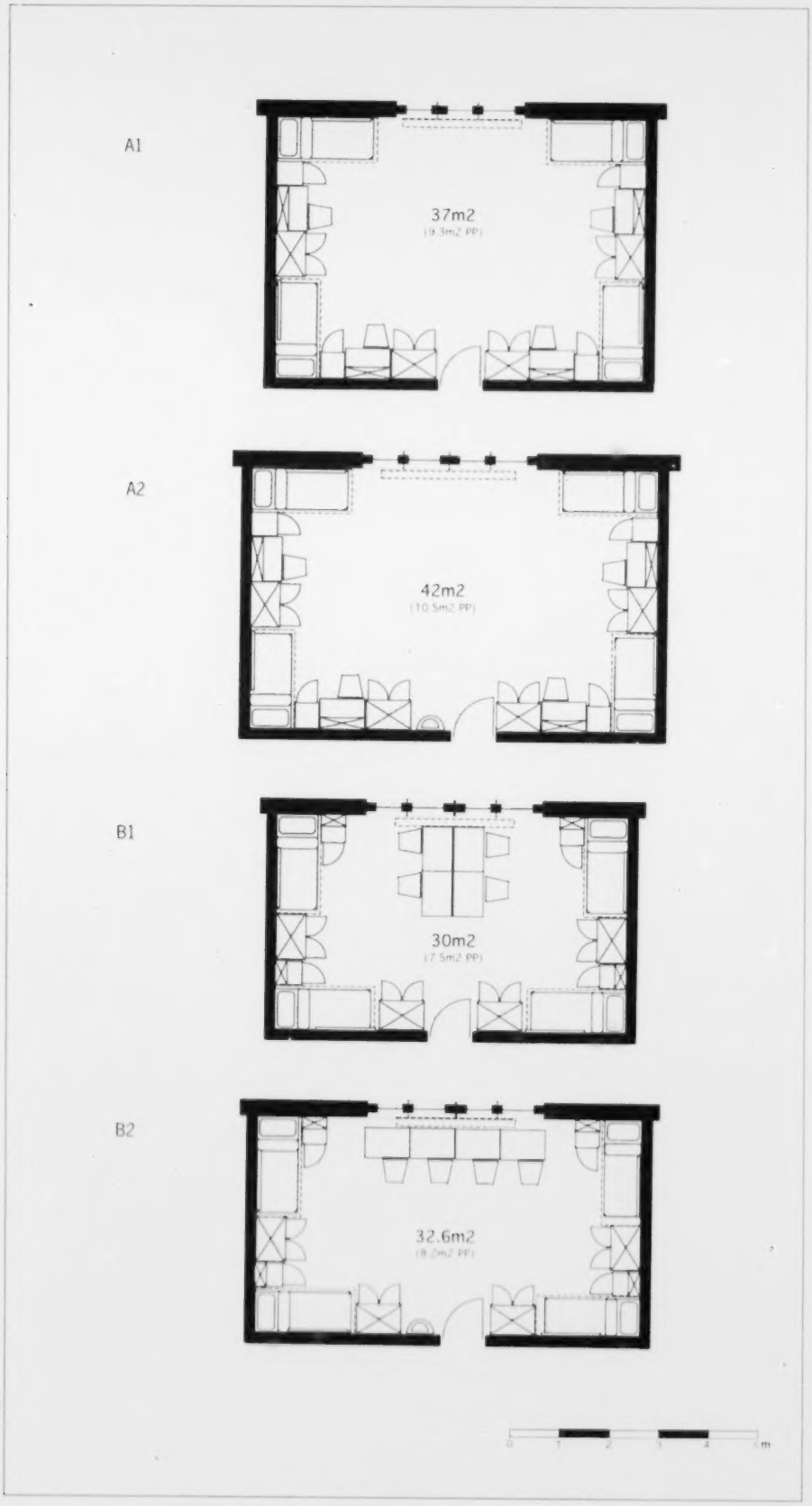

Fig 3.8
Plans of bedrooms for four 11-13 year olds
These show two alternative arrangements for worktops. A1 and 2 has them located by individual beds and B1 and 2 have them grouped together.

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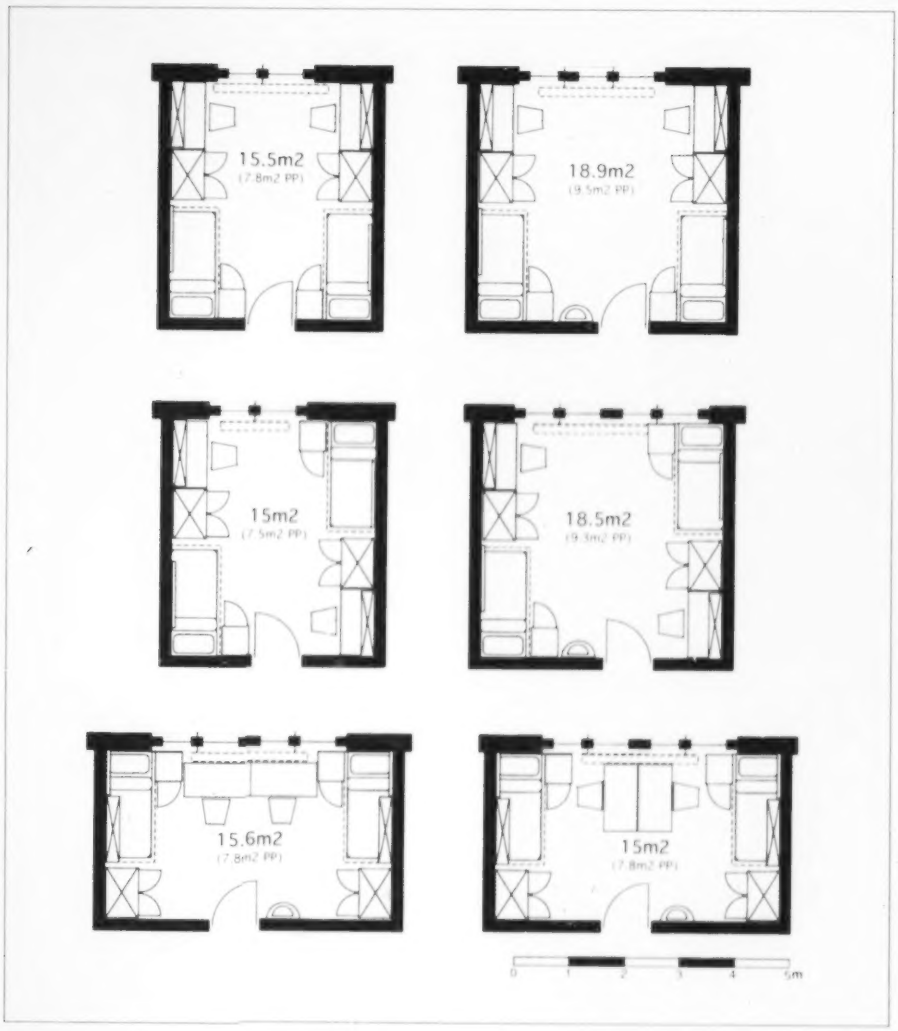


Fig 3.9
Plans of double study bedroom for two 14-15 year olds
Double study bedrooms showing pinboard, shelves and individual worktops and chairs, as well as bedside table and wardrobe with and without wash hand basins.

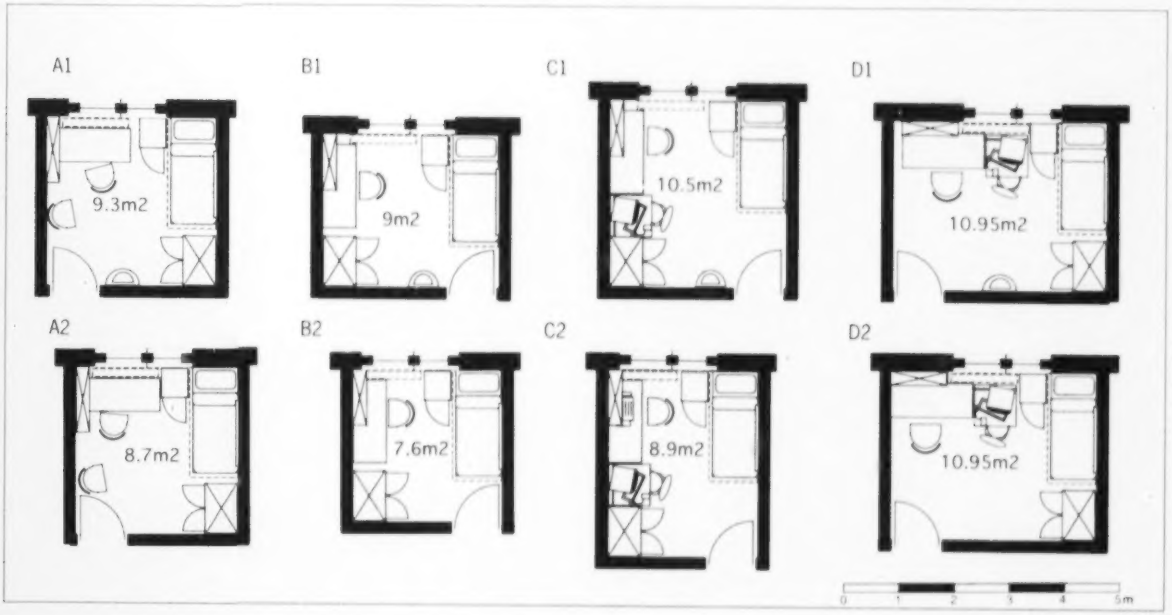
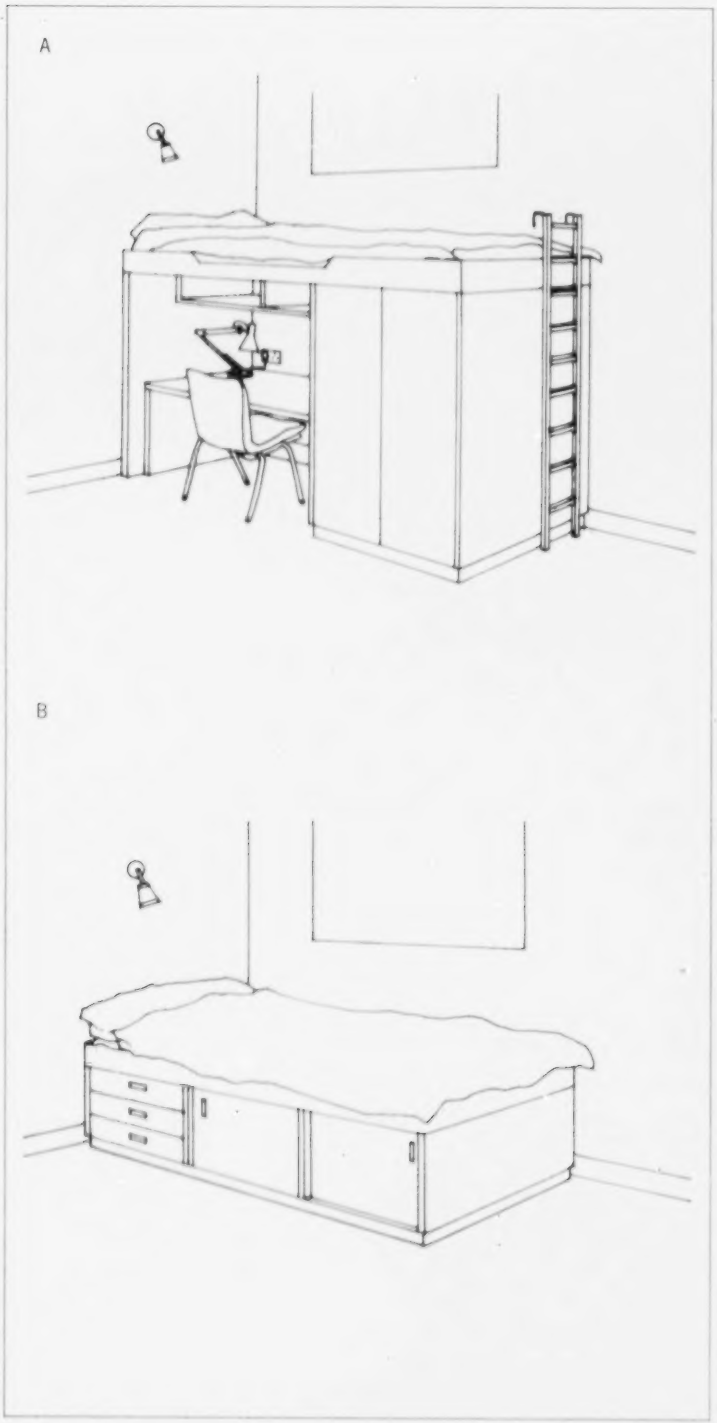


Fig 3.10
Plans of study bedroom for a 16+ student
Single study bedroom as 3.9 with a larger worktop, a writing chair and in (C&D) a computer table and chair.

Fig 3.11
Cabin bed and high level bed arrangements
Cabin bed, A, with higher than usual bed and storage underneath. High level bed, B, with worktop and clothes storage underneath.



3.11 The division of large rooms into cubicles by door height partitions may require a reduction in number of beds. Ideally cubicles need to be equivalent in floor area to a single room as they need to contain the same furniture. Converting a large dormitory into sensibly planned and designed cubicles may have a useful role as an interim measure before implementing the provision of small bedrooms or study bedrooms, or where there are insurmountable building limitations, e.g. listed building status.

3.12 The top floor of boarding houses are commonly used for bedrooms, and in older buildings they sometimes have sloping ceilings. It is important, therefore, to ensure that there is adequate head room, particularly above beds.

3.13 Low level partitions (e.g.1.2m high) do not satisfactorily increase privacy, and restrict flexibility of space. Converting a dormitory with these, therefore, has little or no value, and unless the beds are a minimum of 0.9m apart would not comply with the SPRs.

3.14 Some schools favour bunk beds to create additional floor space, provided these are safe, this is satisfactory. However, there are problems of bed wetting and safety with younger children, and for older boarders there is the need for greater privacy and independence. They may, therefore, only be acceptable for a very limited age range and should only be used to increase the floor area available, rather than to fit more boarders in a bedroom.

3.15 Other possible arrangements are a bed, set higher than normal, with built-in drawers underneath, making use of otherwise under-used space, and a bed at high level with space below for worktop, hanging space, and drawers (see Fig 3.11).

3.16 The bedroom environment and any associated quiet social areas should be comfortable and pleasant. They should be visually interesting, through the use of colour, texture, lighting and display.

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Sanitary Accommodation

3.17 Ideally this should be on the same floor as bedrooms and easily accessible from them. Circulation routes between bedroom and sanitary accommodation should be relatively private. They should not go through public areas of the building, pass through the sleeping accommodation occupied by others, or pass through accommodation used by boarders of the opposite gender. Consideration should be given to distribution of WC and bathing/showering facilities through boarding buildings, rather than necessarily grouping these facilities in one area or 'block', particularly to ensure ready access from sleeping areas. The main activities being provided for are:

- washing
- shaving
- hair-washing
- bathing/showering in complete privacy (including undressing, drying and dressing)
- using the WC or urinals
- disposing of sanitary towels without embarrassment.

Fig 3.12 illustrates bathroom accommodation.

3.18 The SPRs set out the minimum number of sanitary fittings required. When providing for boys, the balance of WCs to urinals will need considering in the light of the number and needs of the population. It is suggested that at least one third of sanitary fittings for boys should be WCs. In small schools, and some special schools a higher proportion may be useful. Additional provision that may be considered is bidets. Sanitary accommodation for boarders should be provided separately from staff, should be separate for each gender (except for under 8s) and be separate for different age groups. Fittings should be of a standard suitable for institutional use and of an appropriate size.

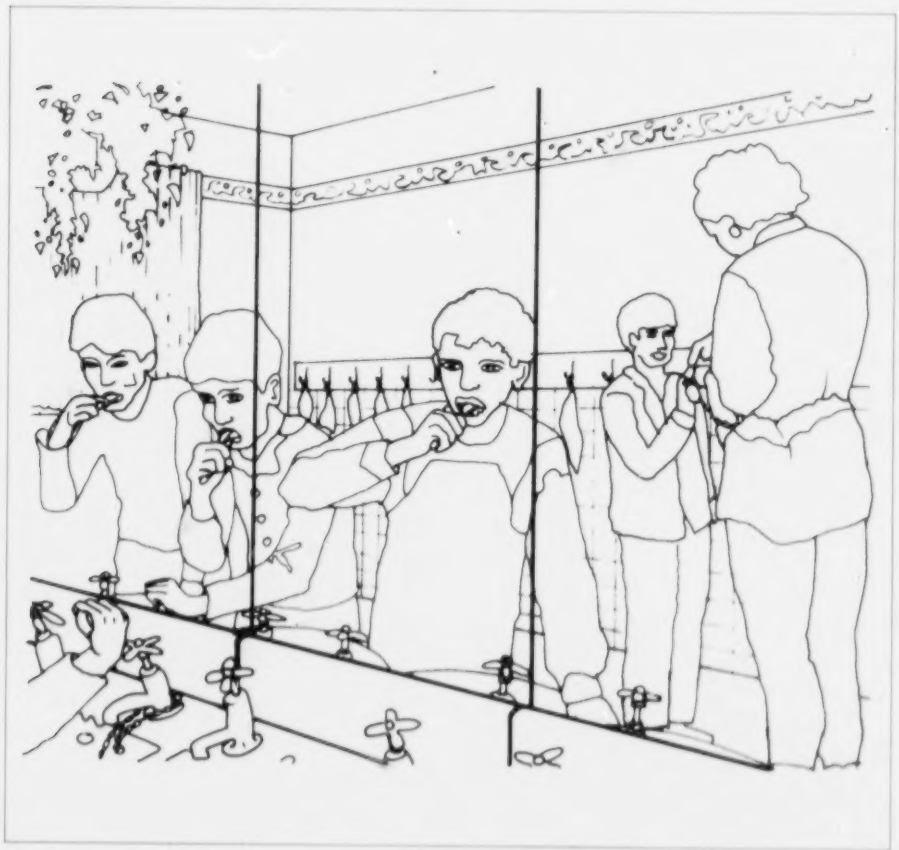

Fig 3.12
Bathroom accommodation
Showing an adult with group of younger boarders at bedtime

3.19 There is scope for the use of colour, mobiles and plants in the bathroom area, which need never be stark or institutional. Sanitary provision in a residential situation is inevitably less private than that at home. Careful thought needs to be given to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between the level of privacy desired and degree of supervision needed. For young children bathing, showering and washing requires some supervision, particularly for children under 8. Bathtime is also a time for chatting and sometimes confiding in adults. Older boarders may feel shy and vulnerable during and after puberty because of physical and psychological changes at this time. However it should be borne in mind that bathrooms are areas of the boarding house where teasing, bullying, and other forms of abuse may take place.

3.20 WC, bath and shower partitions and doors must be full height in order to provide privacy apart from ventilation gaps (i.e. not half height or 'stable door' type). There should be provision when taking a bath or shower, to undress and store clothes, in privacy. Baths and shower trays should therefore have sufficient enclosed space next to them to allow for this. Consideration might be given to locks that can be opened from the outside in an emergency.

3.21 There is a need for storage for boarders' flannels, towels and toothbrushes which must not touch each other. Wet towels should have special provision for drying or be washed daily.

3.22 Sanitary towel disposal facilities should be provided in any house where there are girls over 8 years old. This is to meet the needs of those girls whose onset of menstruation is at an early age, and also to raise awareness for those approaching puberty. Girls should be able to dispose of sanitary towels without embarrassment.

3.23 There should be sanitary accommodation associated with the social, recreation and dining accommodation, both to allow for easy hand-washing and drying before meals, for use by visitors, including those of the opposite gender, and by wheelchair users. Shared towels for hand drying are not acceptable. Roller towels with long loops should never be used as they are a health hazard, and there have been instances of misuse leading to fatalities.

Social and Recreation Spaces

3.24 Houses may have quite a wide age range, commonly spanning five or more years and, at the extreme, having boarders from 5 to 19 years old. Because of the different stages in development and interests, and in order to reduce the risk of bullying, houses with a wide age range or with large numbers, might have separate social areas for older and younger boarders. Recreation areas can normally be shared by a wider age range. The SPRs state that there should be a minimum of 2.3m² of living accommodation per pupil.

3.25 In mixed boarding houses there should always be some quiet social space for each gender. As already mentioned there are advantages in providing this within or associated with bedrooms.

3.26 Quiet social areas should be carpeted, and have low upholstered chairs and low tables. The spaces should be inviting, pleasant to be in, perhaps with pictures, plants and domestic lighting.

3.27 The recreation areas will need more robust finishes to allow for the heavier wear arising from active pursuits.

3.28 A house should ideally have a practical hobbies room where artefacts can be made, where projects can be left out and where glue, paint and fabrics can be used. A sink with hot and cold water, pin board and a magazine rack is desirable. Direct access to the outside from the hobbies room enables projects to be done out of doors. Figs 3.13 3.17 illustrate some of these activities.

3.29 There should ideally be a designated library or area for reading books, newspapers and magazines, as well as consulting reference books. Furniture might be a

mixture of tables and chairs for writing, together with low comfortable chairs and tables. Such an area should be comfortable and pleasant to be in and could be a separate room, or a corner of a quiet social area. If a separate room in a large boarding house is provided there might well be a rule of quiet outside prep time so that boarders can continue studying or pursue a quiet activity.

3.30 Computers might also be provided in an area nearby. These should be placed on a worktop of at least 0.75m deep, which should be of an appropriate height for the age range, suitably wide to house IT equipment (1m is a useful guide), provided with cable runs to safely contain trailing wires and have appropriate adjustable chairs. The separation between library area and computers allows for the higher noise level created when pairs and/or groups of boarders are using computers.

3.31 In schools with boarders of a particular religious background or tradition, the study of religious texts in small groups, prayers in a designated room, or similar activities may be an important part of the daily routine.

3.32 There is the question of arrangements for watching TV and videos. Many different solutions are possible. Watching TV tends to be intermittent so that a dedicated space does not seem to be justified. When the TV room is in the only quiet social area it may become dominated by chairs arranged in cinema-like rows which make the room unsympathetic for other activities. If the space is conceived and furnished as a quiet social space, suitable for a number of activities of which TV/video watching is only one, and takes place on a planned basis, this can be a workable situation.

3.33 An alternative, if the size of the house permits, is to have a small dedicated TV room, perhaps with built-in bench seating and bean bags, which can hold a proportion of the house. If there is some event or video which the whole house wish to watch, the TV could be wheeled into one of the larger areas to allow a large audience to watch it.

Fig 3.13
Quiet social area for younger boarders
A group doing a jigsaw puzzle. Note use of floor area, plant, picture and comfortable low seating.

Fig 3.14
Quiet social area for older boarders
A group relaxing. Note the pictures, plants and comfortable low seating.

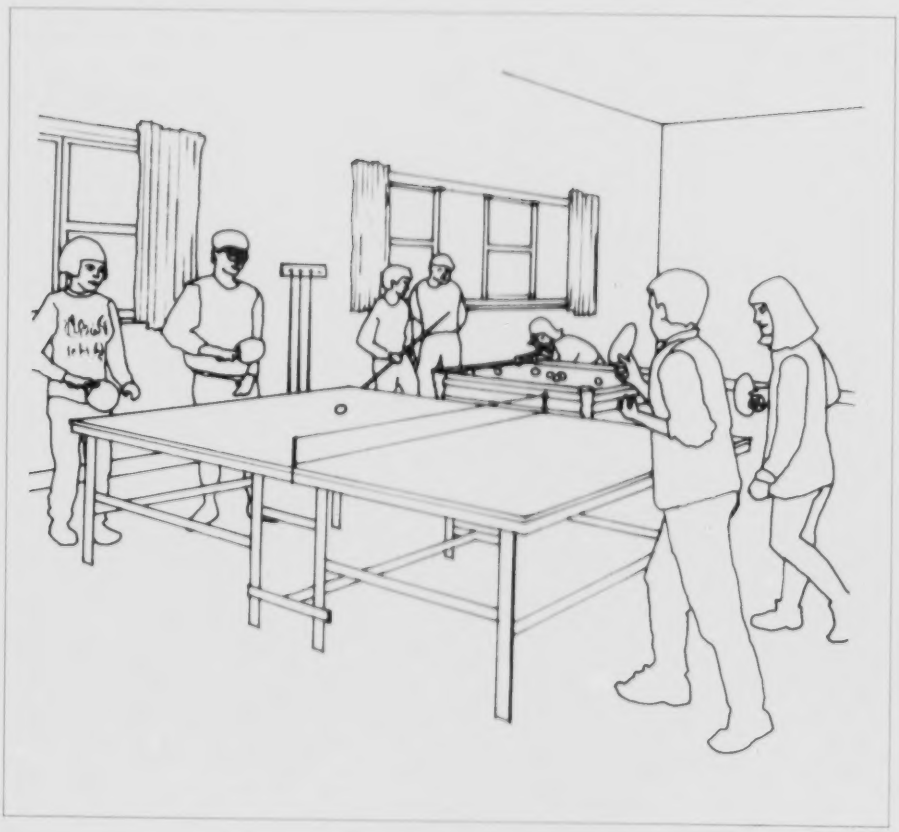

Fig 3.15
Recreation area
Group playing table tennis and pool.

Fig 3.16
Hobbies room
A group with adult precence making decorations.

Fig 3.17
Library
Group of older boarders reading and studying.

Planning Social and Recreation Suites

3.34 New provision for three typical boarding situations is considered below and illustrated by planning studies. These reflect the points made earlier about providing for good practice in terms of the type and range of spaces provided, and the relationship between them. The thinking behind them can be applied when designing for other house sizes and age ranges. Remodelling existing accommodation usually requires some compromise, but it is expected that these planning studies will also assist in making well informed decisions when adapting existing buildings.

3.35 As with the sleeping accommodation, the plans are not intended to be used as they stand. They illustrate some ways in which the good practice described in Section 2 can be provided for. They assume there is provision for study within bedrooms and that there is some social area associated with bedrooms, particularly where homes are mixed. Schools will want to take into account the particular needs of their boarders and the availability of other facilities both on and off the school site.

3.36 In all cases the main spaces are grouped around a central area which acts as a focus. It is somewhere for people to meet each other before going on to other activities and for information to be displayed, and is likely to be a busy area.

3.37 The first example, Fig 3.18, is a house of twenty 7-9 year olds. With a small size and two-year age span, a single quiet social space would be appropriate and it is assumed that there is a recreation area elsewhere which is shared with other houses of a similar size.

3.38 The main ingredients are a central area, which may also be an entrance lobby; a staff base, well situated for supervision; social area, opening off the lobby; hobbies room, with door to the outside; and a small TV room.

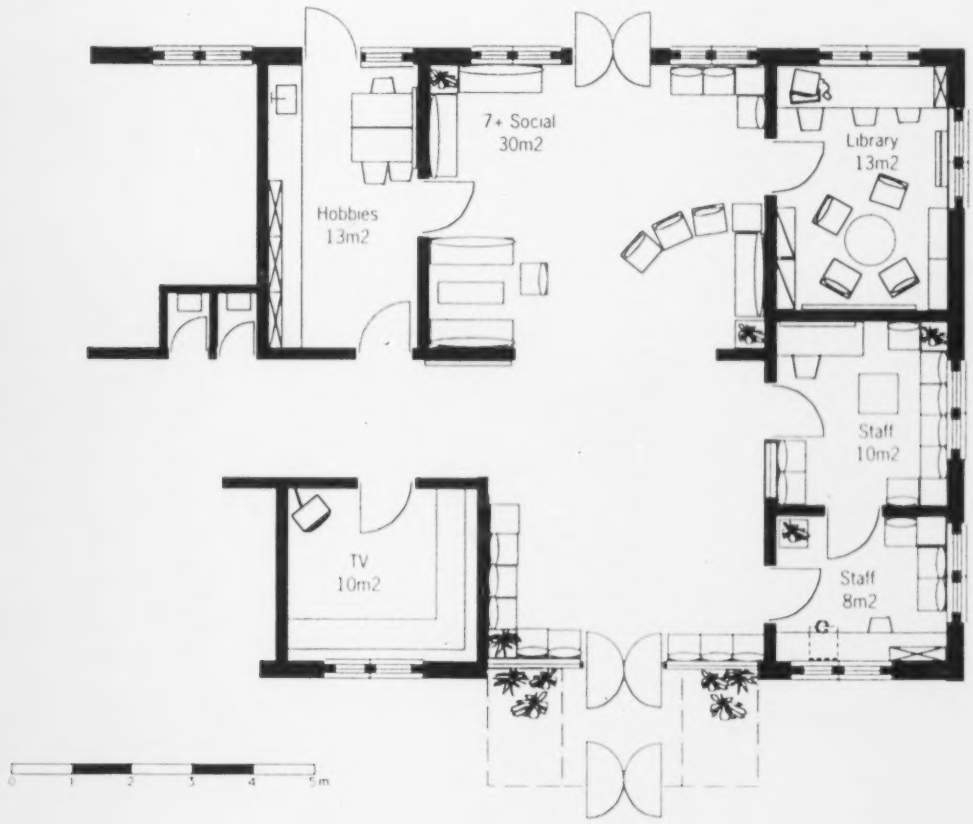

Fig 3.18
Plan of social and recreation suite for twenty 7-9 year olds.
This assumes a shared recreation area nearby. Note the central lobby.

3.39 The next example, Fig 3.19, is a house of thirty rising 8-12 year olds. In this case it is assumed that it is the only boarding house in the school or that it is some distance from any other house. Therefore, it has its own recreation provision. The quiet social area provided is in two spaces to allow for separation by age, with a break at 11.

Fig 3.19
Plan of social and recreation suite for thirty 8-12 year olds
Note the two age related social areas and recreation area.

31

Fig 3.20
Plan of social and recreation suite for forty 11-15 year olds
Note the more open plan arrangement of the social areas.

3.40 The third example, Fig 3.20, is a slightly larger house with forty 11-15 year olds. Again, because of the wide age range, it has two quiet social areas, increased in size from the areas shown in Fig 3.19 because of the larger number of occupants. The other ingredients are similar to those in the house for thirty. However the arrangement is different, with the quiet social areas more open to the lobby and the circulation and the staff base in a different position, although still well located for supervision and access.

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Study

3.41 The extent to which homework is done will vary according to the curriculum being followed and the age of the boarders. The accommodation requirements will depend on the attitude to supervision and informal help. Support for homework is a feature of good boarding education, and all ages benefit from this.

3.42 From about 14+ those following examination courses benefit from working in a dedicated space. This might be provided in bedrooms, so that they can continue to study outside formal prep time. For younger boarders, who are less likely to study outside the designated times and who may need more direct supervision, there are various possibilities depending how the supervision is organised. One is to use the worktops in the bedrooms. Another is to use the communal parts of the house such as the library, the computer room, or part of the quiet social room if this is suitably furnished. The house dining room might also be used.

3.43 Another possible arrangement is the use of a school classroom or library, if these are reasonably located in relation to the house. A dedicated room for study within the house may be required to meet the philosophy for supervision. However the furniture and fittings appropriate for study may mean that it can only make a limited contribution to other house activities.

Telephones

3.44 The availability of a telephone link between the boarder and family, friends and other agencies is of the utmost importance and it is good practice to encourage this contact. Guidance under the Children Act states that boarders should be able to contact parents, relatives and friends in private by such means as a suitably located payphone. This means without being overheard and with a degree of visual privacy so that boarders do not have to draw attention to themselves if they wish to a make private calls. Thus a booth of some kind with a closable door is preferable; a hood alone does not provide adequate privacy, nor does access to an office telephone.

3.45 Consideration of the numbers of telephones provided should take account of the frequency of boarders' visits home, the time available for making telephone calls and the needs of the boarders. Pupils with families overseas often value the use of a fax machine because of time differences which can make telephoning difficult.

3.46 Information about ChildLine and its telephone number should be prominently displayed, as should information about the complaints procedure available, and about the availability of independent listeners and other help lines.

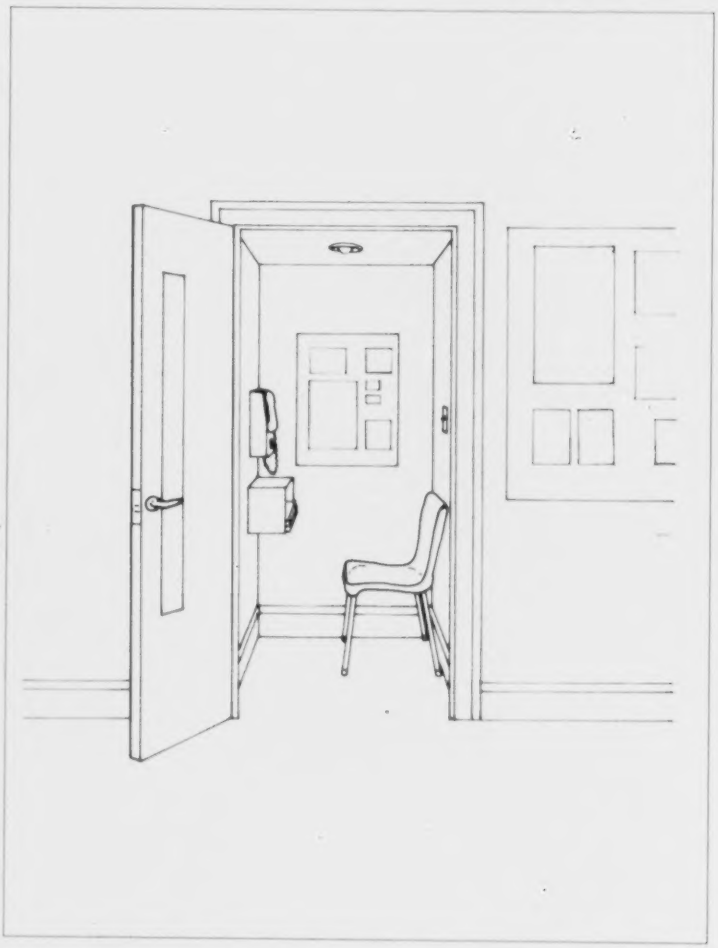

Fig 3.21
Telephone booth providing privacy for the user

Provision for Meals

3.47 The SPRs state that there should be accommodation for preparing and eating meals, and that if appropriate accommodation is available nearby this may be taken into account.

3.48 From a social and pastoral point of view, a good arrangement for meals would be for boarders to have breakfast, the evening meal and weekend meals in their houses, and lunch in the main school. It allows for a more home-like environment at the beginning and end of the day with the possibility of a different social grouping, for example within year groups at lunch time. This does, however, depend on facilities at the house being able to provide a meal of good quality.

3.49 Taking this further, breakfast and the evening meal might be house social occasions, with meals served at the table and staff eating with the boarders. Lunch at the main school could be a quicker meal, with self-service, to allow time for other things to be done in the lunch break.

3.50 In practice, however, as kitchens are expensive to provide and run and dining rooms are not heavily used spaces, making what amounts to double provision is not always economic. Thus there will often need to be an element of compromise in what is provided. Important considerations when planning dining rooms is the limited time available for large numbers of people to have a meal, the arrangements for queuing, and amelioration of the effect of noise. With self-service arrangements there should be sufficient space for orderly queuing, indoors and with appropriate supervision. The location and design of the kitchen should be discussed with the local fire authority at an early stage. The possibility of future increase in numbers should be considered when planning kitchens.

Medical Care

3.51 There should be provision for routine medical care of boarders. The SPRs set out requirements for medical accommodation. A medical room must have a wash-hand basin with hot and cold water. It should be designed to ensure that conversations are not overheard. There should be a waiting area outside. The room might also be used as the base for a visiting practitioner. A lockable cupboard for storing medicines should be provided. Consideration should be given as to whether this should also be in a lockable room. In some cases medication needs to be kept at a low temperature. A refrigerator should be available for this, and appropriate measures taken to ensure that boarders do not have access to it. The storage of medicine that needs to be easily accessible in an emergency should also be considered.

Fig 3.22
Dining
Boarders and adults having a meal. Note curtain, picture, plants, tablecloth.

3.52 Boarding schools must also make provision for caring for children who become unwell while at school, and the SPRs set out minimum requirements for this. They require all boarding schools to have one or more sick rooms, and give minimum sizes, and to have associated baths, washrooms and WCs. In a mixed school with boarders of 8 years old and above there must be separate provision for each gender. In addition, when a school has more than forty pupils it should have an isolation room. The best location for sick rooms and isolation rooms will depend on the school organisation and house size, and arrangement for the care and supervision of unwell boarders.

3.53 The particular arrangements made for an individual boarder when unwell should be determined in consultation with health care staff. There are three main categories of illness to be considered:

- Minor conditions requiring daytime bed rest and some adult supervision, but with no special need for separation from others, or for dedicated sanitary accommodation. This can include a bad headache, a heavy cold or need for rest after a minor shock or accident. In general terms for such conditions it is preferable to keep a child in its own room. Thus if the sleeping group is small or they are in a single room they can remain in their own bed, otherwise they may need to move to a sick room.

- More serious or infectious conditions such as influenza and enteritis, require a degree of separation from others, because of infection or other risks, and may also need full-time supervision and some nursing care. The boarder may need to move to a sick room. If complete isolation and/or exclusive use of sanitary facilities, for ease of access or reasons of hygiene, are required the boarder may need to move to an isolation room.

- Some conditions (e.g. sports injury or serious contagious diseases) may require access to specialist facilities such as a hospital type bed, some degree of specialist care and/or isolation from others. Larger schools may therefore wish to consider providing a central medical centre or sanatorium. When the school is too small to warrant this provision the boarder may need to be admitted to hospital. Reference to the need for a sanatorium, except at the smallest schools, is made in paragraph 3.4.7 of "Independent Schools", Volume 5 of the Guidance and Regulations issued under the Children Act (see Bibliography).

In addition there may be non-medical reasons for separation from others such as the need to sleep at different hours from others because of participation in a particular activity, the need for support and supervision at a time of emotional distress, or particular examination requirements.

3.54 Sick rooms and isolation rooms should be easily supervised, appropriately planned and furnished with storage for clothes and personal belongings, including books, a comfortable armchair, a table or worktop and chair for writing or drawing, appropriate lighting for writing and reading in bed and a wash-hand basin within the room for use in connection with medical examinations. There should be some social

Fig 3.23
Sickroom
Unwell boarder. Note furniture including storage for personal belongings

and recreational provision such as board games and a radio. There should also be access to a telephone with the appropriate level of privacy. Ideally an isolation room should have a bath with a shower fitting, toilet and wash hand basin, en-suite.

3.55 The arrangements described above are intended to cater for day-to-day situations. They do not set out to provide for large numbers of boarders being unwell at the same time, such as with an epidemic, where ad hoc arrangements may be necessary. Where there are boarders with special needs additional facilities may be necessary.

Kitchenettes

3.56 Provision for making hot drinks and snacks in the house should be considered. This should take account of the needs for hygiene and storage. It might only be a kettle for making hot drinks, but as boarders get older it is good practice to allow them to make snacks such as toast. A microwave might also be available, under appropriate supervision, and with arrangements for appropriate performance and safety checking. A refrigerator should be provided for hygienic storage of fresh items. A freezer compartment for frozen microwave products may be appropriate. Provision might be in a kitchenette with an eating area. This would also provide somewhere takeaway meals can be eaten (if the school allows this) in order to avoid the use of bedrooms and recreation areas which are not appropriate because of the smell created by hot food.

3.57 The location and design of kitchenettes have fire safety and escape implications, and the local fire authority should be consulted at an early stage. In terms of alarm systems, a heat detector may be more appropriate than a smoke detector as the latter may give false alarms due to burnt crumbs or pieces of bread stuck in toasters.

Fig 3.24
Kitchenette
A group of older boarders having a drink and chat round a table. Note cooker, microwave, toaster and electric kettle.

Laundry

3.58 The provision required for laundering boarders' bed linen and clothing will depend on school policy. Some have a central school laundry, others make provision in individual houses. There should be provision for dealing with wet and soiled bedding and night clothes in an acceptable and reasonably private manner. Whichever is the case, arrangements for distributing both clean and dirty laundry within the house will be needed, including storage. Arrangements may need to be made for mending. There also needs to be storage space for spare bedding. Fig 3.25 illustrates some of the main features of the laundry area.

3.59 Boarders from 13 years upwards may need access to a launderette where they can wash, dry and iron small items of clothing, after suitable guidance, as part of developing independence. This should be separate from the main house (or school) laundry.

Storage

3.60 A range of items may need to be stored in a boarding house. Some of these, such as bicycles, sports equipment, trunks and suitcases, are bulky but have only location and space implications. Others, such as outdoor clothes, including boots and sports clothes, may need not only to be stored, but also to be dried. The SPRs has a general requirement for the storage of boarders belongings, and storage and care of bed linen.

3.61 Consideration should be given to avoiding locating storage or drying rooms to which boarders may have access in isolated and poorly supervised areas as this might encourage bullying, abuse and/or substance abuse.

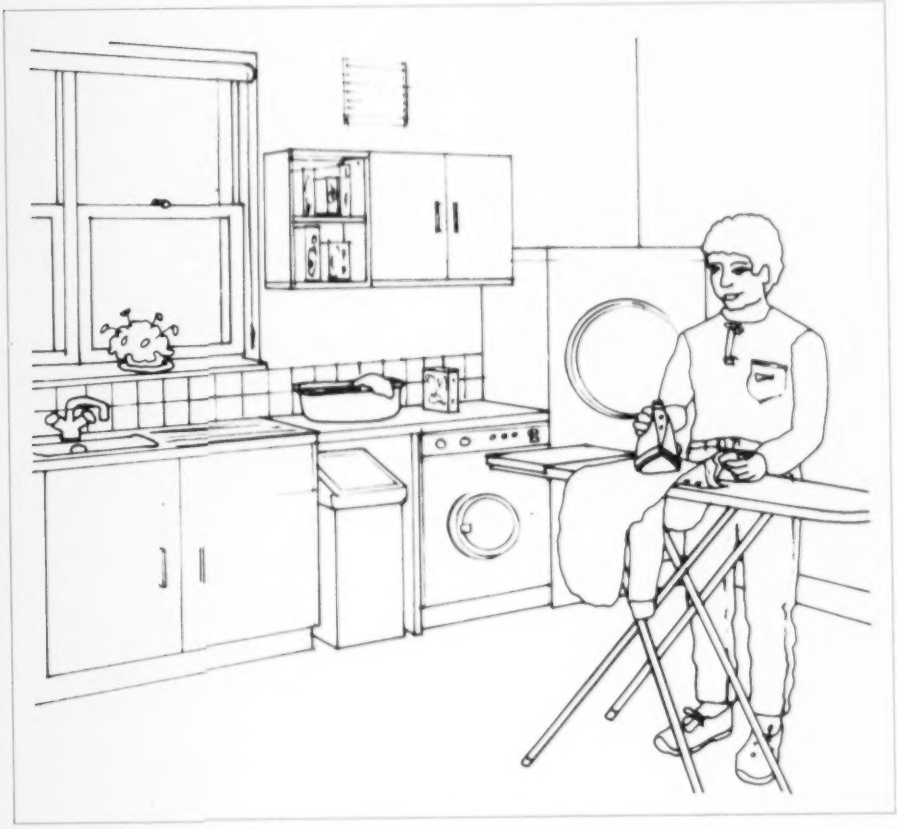

Fig 3.25
Launderette

Site Planning

3.62 Pedestrian and vehicular access to and around the site should be provided in a safe way, including emergency access. There should be measures to prevent unauthorised access to the site and buildings. The DfEE has published guidance on crime prevention in schools generally (see Bibliography).

Other Provision

3.63 A further activity, given a varying degree of weight in different boarding houses, is the ability to gather together the whole house for meetings. These meetings may be house meetings on a regular basis or more occasional gatherings such as parties and other celebrations. Some boarding houses are able to use a space in the main school for such meetings; in some cases, however, this is either not conveniently located, or the house prefers to host the gathering as part of corporate experience within the house setting.

3.64 Some schools may regard it as important to provide a sixth form club, open only at certain times, as a place where pupils over 16 from all the houses, and including day pupils, can meet. This might be licensed to sell alcoholic drinks and may be a place to hold discos and other social events.

3.65 It is important to make provision for boarders to make purchases such as personal items, stationery and snacks. Appropriate provision will depend on circumstances such as age range, size of school and location. It may range from a temporary stall in a social area to a school shop which opens daily.

3.66 Outdoor social and recreational activities need to be provided for. The way and extent to which this is done will depend on circumstances, such as the age range, whether the location is urban or rural, and whether, as is often the case when utilising a large country house, the grounds are generous.

3.67 A house garden could provide opportunities for individual activities such as reading in seclusion close to supervision, and for small group activities such as chatting, play and informal games. Play for young children might include den building and the use of swings and climbing frames under appropriate supervision. Gathering in larger groups, for example —for house or interhouse social events such as barbecues, would also be possible. A garden might also allow for boarders to have their own plots and for pets and animals to be kept, if wished.

Staff

3.68 It is outside the scope of this guidance to discuss staff living accommodation other than its relationship to the boarding house. The SPRs state that staff provision shall be separate from that provided for pupils and should include accommodation for sleeping and associated sanitary facilities and accommodation in which to take meals. Ideally, it should be self-contained as it is likely to be used at times when the school is closed. This will ensure that resident staff have appropriate privacy when off duty, and avoids the possibility of abuse, or accusations of abuse.

3.69 House staff need a base when on duty, ideally centrally positioned in the house for ease of access and supervision. Such a base has important functions for both staff and boarders. It will be an office for the house parents and house tutors when on duty, and a place where records may be kept and official telephone calls made. In addition, it provides a place where staff can meet parents and boarders, both existing and prospective. It can also be a suitable place to keep a signing-out book.

3.70 However, it can have a purpose beyond these as it is a place where boarders know they can usually find a sympathetic adult who will have time for them. Although the space or spaces need to provide for the office function, they might be furnished along the lines of a living room

and be welcoming, with comfortable low chairs, and plants and pictures, to encourage the pastoral function. A possible arrangement would be two adjacent rooms, with one being the more public and the other being a place where conversations can take place in private, bearing in mind the importance to balance the need for privacy with the vulnerability of both the adult and the young person to the risk of accusation of abuse.

3.71 Special schools may have duty staff sleeping in at night. The sleeping-in room should be suitably located for access to pupils and have its own separate sanitary accommodation. Waking night duty staff will need an office and a comfortable place to sit, suitable for talking to a boarder in private if appropriate, rather than a sleeping-in room. The point at the end of the previous paragraph about the need to balance privacy with vulnerability also applies here. The area where medicine is stored, administered and recorded may sensibly be near either.

3.72 There should be provision for all non-resident staff, including domestic, to rest and have access to toilet facilities.

Fig 3.26
Staff study
Adult and boarder having a chat. Note pictures, plants and easy chairs.

Location of Spaces

3.73 The location of spaces is important when planning boarding accommodation. Common sense indicates that the heavily used and more public spaces such as the social and recreation, dining room where meals are taken in the house, staff study etc should be on the ground floor.

3.74 Where a large house has a wide age range, a decision has to be made about how to provide some separation of accommodation which is age related. This might apply to some social and recreation areas and is likely to apply to sleeping accommodation. Where there is a wide age span, i.e. 5 or more years, there should ideally be some separation of sleeping and sanitary accommodation by age. One possibility in a multi-storey building is to have the younger boarders on the lower floors, which is likely to have the advantage of locating them nearer to the main staff accommodation. The alternative of having the younger boarders on the upper floors means that once in bed they will not be disturbed by older boarders. Appropriate separation can also sometimes be achieved by using different wings of a building.

Section 4: Boarders with Special Educational Needs

The range of needs is wide, extending from the need for a supportive environment, to almost complete dependence, and many children may have complex needs. However, the requirements for privacy; dignity; a range of social and recreational activities and age-appropriate accommodation are always there.

4.1 The need for continuity in monitoring and support for personal development is an important factor for all boarding pupils, emphasised by guidance under the Children Act. However, a 24-hour care curriculum may be central to recommendations for boarding education for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The foregoing discussion on planning and designing boarding accommodation applies to all situations, but may need modification in the light of particular special educational needs. This guidance does not set out to offer solutions for every situation, but to describe the general principles that need to be considered when designing and planning boarding accommodation at special schools.

4.2 As boarding may be considered a necessity, not a choice, for pupils with special educational needs and they make up a high proportion of the 52-week boarders, providing a homely environment and means of keeping in touch with family and friends is particularly important. It can sometimes be difficult to make appropriate provision as residential special schools are often housed in older buildings which may be difficult to adapt. They are also frequently far from the kind of urban amenities that many boarders may have been used to at home and need to experience as part of developing life skills.

4.3 Residential special schools often have a relatively small population. Most have less than hundred boarders and a large number have below fifty. The living groups may also be relatively small, often following the family model of four to ten in size. The age range may be large and can include pupils from 5-19, or occasionally even younger children. In most residential special schools the ratio of care staff to boarders will be higher than in mainstream boarding schools, paralleling the smaller teaching group sizes. In the case of pupils with high dependency or challenging behavioural problems the ratio may be very high. There may be waking night staff in many special schools as well as, or instead of, sleeping in night staff.

4.4 Because of the needs of these young people and because a proportion may have been subject to abuse or bullying in the past, they could be vulnerable again, to becoming either victims or perpetrators of abuse or bullying.

4.5 The small scale of special schools, together with the need to ensure that a balanced range of social activities are available, means that the area standards may be higher than in mainstream schools. In addition, many special schools may need independence training facilities, especially as they approach leaving age. Where there are wheelchair users or those with other mobility aids, even higher areas per pupil might be necessary for practical purposes.

4.6 The option of overnight accommodation for parents in order that they may attend statutory review meetings, and for parental contact, can be helpful when the school is a long way from a boarder's home. This should be independent of the boarding accommodation.

4.7 It is not intended to give detailed guidance on providing for special educational needs provision, but common accommodation issues and features which might need to be taken into account are discussed below, followed by additional considerations arising from the nature of particular special needs. As many boarders will have complex needs a clear analysis of the population being provided for is necessary before planning a residential special school.

4.8 When designing for special educational needs it is particularly important to consult widely with the staff and boarders who will be using the accommodation. It can also be useful to seek the views of boarders' families and carers. The relevant voluntary organisations are also likely to be a helpful and experienced sources information.

Practical Considerations

4.9 One of the main implications for designing and planning residential special schools is the need for additional storage and a generous supply of power points. These are likely to be required for various mobility aids, and for a range of learning aids. As well as requiring space in use, mobility aids require room for storage and maintenance. In addition, the medical needs of boarders are often more complex than in the mainstream situation, and there are implications for the size, type and location of medical support spaces.

4.10 The need to prepare older boarders for when they leave school means that opportunities for developing independence may be needed within the living environment. This will depend on policy, but could consist of providing appropriate spaces, furniture and equipment for cooking, and other self-care skills such as clothes care. It might also include the availability of a self-contained bedsitting room or flat within a residential unit.

4.11 In some circumstances, greater adult assistance and supervision, sometimes on a continuous one to one basis, may be necessary. This has implications for the width of circulation spaces, and the size and planning of bedrooms and sanitary accommodation.

4.12 In special schools it is particularly important to ensure that pupils are not outside reasonable adult supervision. Therefore care should be taken to avoid isolated areas.

4.13 Fire escape arrangements need careful consideration. Early discussion with the local fire authority, who will need careful briefing on the particular school population, is essential to ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made in case of fire.

4.14 For many boarders with special educational needs, the use of a telephone raises particular problems of physical access, and of privacy in use where there is difficulty in communication. However, there is often a high degree of dependency on it for keeping in touch with home. Therefore telephone provision may need to be more generous than in the mainstream situation, and specially adapted to specific needs.

4.15 Cubicles and room doors should ideally open outwards with any lockable doors, such as those to WCs and bathrooms having locks that can be opened from outside in an emergency. Consideration should be given to the need for alarm facilities in WCs, baths and showers.

4.16 In special schools it is particularly important that furniture, fittings and fixtures are robust, and that there are arrangements for any damage to be promptly repaired.

Specific Learning Difficulties Including Dyslexia

4.17 As some of their teaching material is on tape and work may be produced using speech rather than writing, the main additional consideration is likely to be space and services to use extra computer equipment and tape recorders and for storage. There are implications for planning study spaces. These boarders may also need generous telephone provision when there is a problem in letter writing.

Speech and Language Difficulties

4.18 Boarders may have particular aids to assist communication, including computers. Pupils with speech and language difficulties,

including those with a hearing impairment in addition, may have a particular problem in using a telephone. Therefore, telephones with suitable adaptations may be needed to enable them to keep in touch with home, particularly if they cannot easily cope with the alternative of letter writing. Residential care staff are likely to wish to encourage communication skills through a range of games and social activities.

Sensory Impairment

4.19 Boarders with a visual or hearing impairment may have additional needs in relation to a physical or a learning difficulty which must also be taken into account when considering accommodation. Where there are hearing impairments it is important to take measures to reduce background noise by using absorbent ceiling and wall finishes and by the use of carpet on floors to reduce impact noise. For boarders with visual impairment good lighting is needed at appropriate high or low levels. The use of contrast of colour, tone and texture on wall and floor surfaces for identification and location is important, and the acoustic design of spaces can assist in facilitating orientation. Where pupils have a hearing impairment, alarm systems will need to have a visual impact, and auditory impact where there is visual impairment.

4.20 There may be additional space requirements if specialist items of equipment are needed to compensate for sensory impairment. There may be requirements for adaptations to telephones.

Moderate Learning Difficulties

4.21 In terms of residential accommodation the needs of this group of pupils are little different from mainstream boarding pupils apart from the needs of independence training. However, in many cases boarders with moderate learning difficulties may also include a proportion with some emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

4.22 One of the commonest reasons for a boarding recommendation for special educational needs is related to emotional and behavioural difficulties. The need for suitable spaces for counselling is particularly important.

4.23 Boarders with behavioural difficulties may exhibit unpredictable, antisocial and sometimes aggressive behaviour. This has implications for the safety of themselves and others. Spaces should be large enough to allow sufficient personal space and avoid jostling. There is a particular need for appropriate supervision by staff, robust furnishings and fittings and finishes, safety glass etc. Provision of carpeting in bedrooms, social areas and corridors reduces noise level, and can help to reduce disruptive behaviour.

4.24 It is less likely that pupils with emotional difficulties will be found in residential special schools. This results in more withdrawn behaviour and boarding is less likely to be regarded as appropriate for them.

Severe Learning Difficulties

4.25 Boarders are likely to have considerable problems with learning and communication. Amongst their population may be some children with social impairments or autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical difficulties, and children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The prevalence of epilepsy is often high. Many of the accommodation issues raised under emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical difficulties are relevant to such schools. It is particularly important that the environment created takes account of chronological age rather than perceived age.

4.26 Boarders with severe learning difficulties sometimes have problems with motor co-ordination. Bathing and toileting

arrangements may need to include provision for some pupils with continence difficulties and arrangements to allow for adult assistance should have the dignity and privacy necessary for the boarder as a priority, not the convenience of the adults giving the care. Soft play facilities and sensory stimulation may be needed in the boarding house unless there is easy access to such provision in the main school; for these boarders these facilities are important to support recreational activities which may be part of the 24-hour curriculum.

4.27 A small number of residential special schools provide education for boarders with severely challenging behaviour which can include particularly destructive and self-damaging behaviour. It is important to balance boarders' rights to privacy and dignity against the high level of supervision necessary for these young people. In such schools special security measures may be necessary to prevent injury, self-injury and pupils inappropriately leaving rooms, buildings or the site without staff supervision.

4.28 Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that electrical sockets, and light switches are, if necessary, outside bedrooms; that lights and heating sources are protected; to ways of protecting display of posters, family photographs and curtains in bedrooms from destruction; and to ensuring safety of windows. There is sometimes conflict between security measures and adequate ventilation. In some cases wall surfaces in bedrooms and furnishings and fittings may need to take into account the smearing of faeces.

Physical Difficulties

4.29 While many boarders at schools for those with physical difficulties have mobility as their main need, a proportion will have additional medical problems, for example epilepsy and incontinence. They may also have a range of difficulties with learning and communication. In addition to ensuring that mobility needs are met, there is need also to consider difficulties with fine motor co-ordination, and the extent of provision of computers and other electronic aids to communication.

4.30 Boarders may have a variety of aids to walking as well as need for wheelchair use. It is not unusual for one pupil to have several wheelchairs, both manual and power driven and wheelchairs take up a good deal of space. There are implications for the size of corridors, including space to store emergency wheelchairs outside bedrooms for fire escape at night, and storage. Power driven wheelchairs are likely to need regular overnight charging, and a dedicated battery room is required for this.

4.31 Appropriate arrangements for access to buildings and around them need to be considered at an early stage. Lifts will be required for vertical circulation and these need to be large enough to accommodate wheelchair users, including helpers and non-standard wheelchairs.

4.32 The size of bedrooms may need to allow for pupils visiting each other in wheelchairs. In addition, they may need to allow for assistance in transfer from wheelchair to bed, and for the provision of hoists. The fact that some boarders can only transfer from one side may need to be taken into account. Figs 4.1 and 4.2 show plans of bedrooms for wheelchair users.

4.33 Bathroom and toileting facilities need space for adult assistance, with arrangements that provide dignity and privacy, and appropriate alarm cord systems, for those able to cope independently. Sanitary towel disposal, and arrangements for sufficient supervision to ensure proper disposal, may need careful consideration. Fig 4.3 shows a bathroom for wheelchair users.

4.34 The development of a proper sense of ownership of boarders' own bodies may need very positive encouragement with particular emphasis on privacy, especially where young people have been dependent on adult care for a much longer time than is normal.

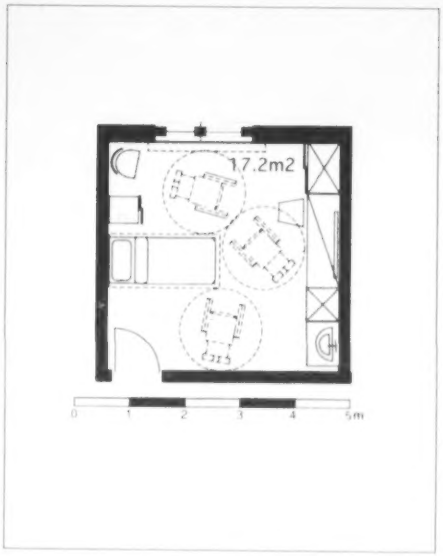

Fig 4.1
Plan of bedroom for one wheelchair user
Showing room to manoeuvre wheelchair and adjustable height table and cupboard with sliding doors

4.35 In social and recreation areas there may need to be space for wheelchair users, and seats of an appropriate height to allow conversation with wheelchair users and suitable for the range of physical difficulties found amongst those using the accommodation. The design of areas for making snacks will require careful attention, particularly to heights of furniture and modified controls for equipment. Fig 4.4 shows a recreation area in use.

4.36 Boarders in wheelchairs may have difficulty in manoeuvring, visual perception difficulties, including difficulty in judging distances. Therefore, surfaces and furniture might need to be resistant to accidental impact, particularly in circulation routes and entrances to rooms. Sharp corners and projections should be avoided to minimise accidental injury.

4.37 It is particularly important that fire escape arrangements are discussed with the local fire authority at an early stage.

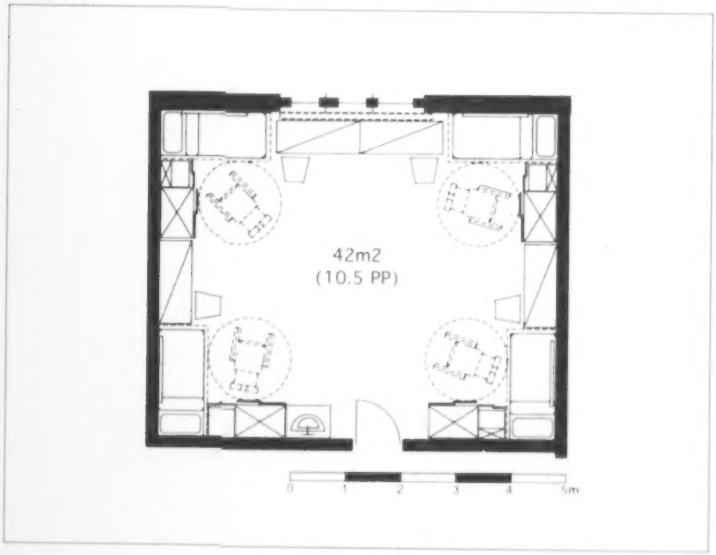

Fig 4.2
Plan of bedroom for four wheelchair users
Showing wheelchair turning circles, adjustable height worktops and cupboards with sliding doors.

Fig 4.3
Bathroom accommodation for wheelchair users
Adult assisting boarder in using hoist.

Fig 4.4
Recreation area with wheelchair users

Section 5: General Design Considerations

This Section discusses some other aspects that need to be considered when designing and planning boarding accommodation.

5.1 The legislation that covers teaching and other aspects of school accommodation also applies to boarding accommodation. As already mentioned, all maintained schools, non-maintained special schools and independent schools approved to admit pupils with special educational needs, are subject to the SPRs and these requirements should be considered at a very early stage in the design of a project. As well as the minimum area standards and various health and safety requirements for boarders set out in Part III, Part IV contains general structural and environmental requirements and specific requirements for heating, lighting and ventilation.

5.2 Building projects at maintained schools and non-maintained special schools are also subject to the DfEE Constructional Standards. These make reference to Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations and associated Approved Documents together with certain DfEE publications. Independent schools are subject to the requirements of the Building Regulations.

5.3 Although the SPRs do not apply to independent schools (other than those approved to admit pupils with special educational needs) with mandatory force, they are used as a benchmark by OFSTED in judging the suitability of premises and accommodation.

5.4 The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, and associated Approved Code of Practice (known as ACOP), which apply to buildings in use also need to be considered when planning and designing boarding accommodation.

Heating and Ventilation

5.5 This guidance does not set out to cover every aspect of heating and ventilation design and guidance is available from professional bodies. However, there is no guidance specifically covering boarding accommodation.

5.6 The strategy for heating and ventilation should always be considered together. The temperature needed will vary according to the time of day; sleeping accommodation may not, for example, need to be as warm during the day when it is not in use.

5.7 Social areas associated with the sleeping accommodation where the occupants may be lightly clad should be designed to be heated to 21°C. Bedrooms should be naturally ventilated wherever possible, and care must be taken to prevent cold draughts at sleeping level. Window openings should be carefully chosen to allow controlled draught-free ventilation overnight.

5.8 Groups of showers and toilets require extract fans to control condensation and air quality. Individual toilets located on external walls can be ventilated using air bricks. Extract ventilation may require incoming air to be heated to maintain appropriate temperatures and avoid chill.

5.9 In winter, when the social and recreation spaces are densely occupied, there may be a reluctance to open windows because of cold draughts, resulting in inadequate ventilation. There may be a case for using extract fans in these areas, with heated air from within the building being drawn into the spaces.

5.10 Local controls should be provided, e.g. thermostatic radiator values, both to enable the temperature in the recreation area to be reduced when it is being used for physically active pastimes, and to avoid overheating in the social area when it is densely occupied.

5.11 Clothes storage and drying rooms need to be well-ventilated. In drying rooms there could be a heat source in the space as well as mechanical extract ventilation to supplement a small amount of permanent ventilation. When the quantity of clothing, footwear, and equipment needing to be dried is large, e.g. where there is an emphasis on all-weather outdoor activities, the installation of a dehumidifier should be considered.

5.12 Boarders with special educational needs who are not able to be very physically active may need a higher heating temperature. The night setback temperature may also need to be higher. Where there are boarders who are immobile or lack sensation, verbal or communication skills, there should be no possibility of contact with surfaces that are hot enough to create damaging heat build up in tissues. It is necessary to provide protection from direct contact with heated surfaces and to ensure that, if the surfaces of accessible supply pipes or heat emitters have a temperature of over 43°C, they are protected by a suitable screen or guard.

5.13 In older buildings there are often problems such as hot and cold spots due to old and inefficient heating systems, with poor or non-existent controls. Heating runs may be lengthy and insulation standards variable following various adaptations and conversions. The comfort level can usually be improved, and running cost savings made, by increasing the level of control and by insulating the pipework and the building structure. Another problem with some older buildings which have been altered or extended is overloaded boilers and the system may have to be improved by upgrading with more efficient boilers and heat emitters.

5.14 In modern buildings ventilation is often a problem area. Air bricks, ventilation slots or grilles, required to provide ventilation in order to protect the building from condensation, fungus and algae, are sometimes overlooked. Windows designed to current standards are comparatively airtight when closed, and thus do not provide a source of permanent ventilation, whereas in older buildings even closed windows usually allow considerable air infiltration. However, the installation of modern double glazed windows in older buildings may reduce this infiltration and give rise to ventilation problems unless some permanent ventilation is provided.

5.15 Windows should be chosen with a view to security and safety and consideration should be given to the need to use safety glass in windows and any other glazing. It should not be possible to fall out of windows. The Workplace Regulations mentioned in Paragraph 5.4 gives guidance on these aspects. Windows should not permit entry by intruders or exit by boarders. If there is sleeping accommodation on the ground floor, high level fanlights or upper windows will often be a suitable solution. Sash windows that provide top and bottom openings are efficient ventilators. All windows should be fitted with stops to limit the size of openings, but this should not be done without consulting the local fire authority, as in some cases windows could be an approved means of escape.

Hot Water

5.16 Hot water supplies should be sufficient to cope with use at peak times but excess storage should be avoided as it wastes energy. As with heating systems there may be a need to compensate for lengthy, poorly insulated pipe runs and take account of overloaded boilers.

5.17 It should be noted that SPRs require that the temperature of hot water supplied to all baths and showers and to wash-hand basins for the very young, or otherwise vulnerable, should not exceed 43°C at the point of delivery. The main temperature controls should not be accessible to boarders. Hot water demands for catering can be high and separate hot water storage at a higher temperature can be provided for kitchens as there is not the same risk of scalding. Boarders with sensory impairments may benefit from relief symbols on hot and cold taps as well as colour symbols. Consideration might be given to the use of spring loaded taps to minimise the risk to misuse (e.g. taps being left running and causing flooding).

Lighting and Power

5.18 Lighting needs to be both efficient and to enhance the general environment; display and notice boards in public areas should be well lit; the use of dimmers in the quiet social areas and bedrooms should be

considered. Local lighting should be provided to work surfaces and to allow reading in bed. Consideration should be given to a minimum level of night-time lighting in circulation routes between bedrooms and sanitary accommodation, and also to enable a boarder to make contact with staff in an emergency. In special schools the requirements of supervision by night-time waking staff must be considered.

5.19 For the visually impaired it is important to standardise heights and locations of switches, socket outlets and other controls within a building. They should be positioned carefully and distinguished by colour contrast and shape. Allowance should also be made for limited mobility, reach and manipulation; and remote controls may be considered.

5.20 The number of power points should be sufficient to ensure that there is no temptation to overload points or rely heavily on trailing leads. There will be considerations of networking any computer rooms and libraries. Even if this is not considered necessary immediately, there could be consideration of how developments in IT can be accommodated at a later date, e.g. by providing routes for hard wiring. Consideration should be given to ensuring there are sufficient TV points to prevent trailing cables.

Communication Systems

5.21 Sophisticated telephone systems are now available that can provide a variety of services, including barring access to a range of telephone numbers. If telephone cabling is provided to study-bedrooms the same cabling can provide network or external modem link-up facilities to computers using line-sharing techniques. In some special schools it is common practice to have duty staff awake through the night to monitor the boarders. Passive infra-red detectors used for security can also be used to notify the waking staff of the movement of children during the night, and baby alarm-type remote microphones can be used to monitor for noise. However, the use of such systems must be managed with care to avoid unacceptable invasion of privacy. In the schools for those with physical difficulties a cord alarm system is required in showers to summon assistance.

Lifts and Hoists

5.22 It should be borne in mind that, in some special schools, lifts may need to accommodate wheelchairs. In lifts for those with sensory impairment, appropriate visual and/or audible indications of operation are required inside the car and at landings. Push-buttons should be positioned for ease of location. Delayed door closing should be provided, preferably with sensitive door edges, or a photocell and light beam. Boarders with physical difficulties may need hoists for baths and for lifting in and out of bed. Tracked hoists are sometimes used. These may have implications for the design of the building structure.

Hazardous Substances

5.23 The presence of hazardous substances needs considering. The Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1992 require schools to identify all substances hazardous to health which are stored or used on the premises, and to prescribe safe working practices for these. Substances will include pharmacological drugs and cleaning agents.

5.24 Particular precautions are necessary for waste that may be contagious or carry hygiene risk, e.g. soiled diapers or linen. These may require separate collection, transport within the building and disposal.

Fire Precautions

5.25 Boarding accommodation falls into purpose group 2(a) of Part B Schedule 1 of the Building Regulations. This applies to both independent schools, which are automatically subject to the Building Regulations, and to maintained schools and non-maintained special schools, as BB7 Fire and the Design of Educational Buildings - referred to in DfEE Constructional Standards (see Bibliography) - does not

cover boarding accommodation. Part B sets out requirements for fire safety and includes the location and design of fire escape routes and emergency lighting. Fire safety and escape arrangements should always be discussed with the local fire authority at an early stage of the design.

Access

5.26 Provision for access to and within boarding accommodation for those with difficulties, including sensory, needs to be considered, and the local authority access officer should be consulted at an early stage in the design. Independent schools are subject to Part M of the Building Regulations and schools under DfEE Constructional Standards to DfEE DN18 Access for Disabled People to Educational Buildings (see Bibliography).

Acoustics

5.27 Acoustics must be considered at an early stage of a design. The acoustic performance of space should be considered, particularly in potentially noisy rooms, such as those used for dining and recreation where adequate acoustic absorption may need to be provided. Staff can find it useful to be aware of what is going on in various parts of the house at all times, and sound can be a valuable clue. This could be impeded if spaces are acoustically isolated, for example by acoustic sealing of doors. There may however need to be sufficient acoustic separation between staff residential areas and pupils' areas to ensure that staff are not unnecessarily disturbed, particularly while off duty. Consideration needs to be given to acoustic separation within the pupils areas, particularly between noisy recreation areas and quieter social, study and sleeping areas.

Furniture and Fittings

5.28 Activities in boarding houses place heavier demands on furniture and fittings than normal domestic use, therefore furniture, fittings and fixtures should be selected with this in mind. British Standards (BS) for furniture exists (BS 4875 and 5873). These describe tests for wear and tear rates, and for structural stability. Ignition resistant requirements for mattresses are guided by the specification BS 7177. The categories range from light use in the domestic situation to the heavy use found in a barrack room. Medium hazard category is generally regarded as the most appropriate standard for boarding accommodation. The need to provide furniture of the appropriate size for various age groups must be borne in mind, BB 62 Body Dimensions of the School Population gives sizes of children aged 3-19 (see Bibliography).

5.29 A number of firms specialise in supplying furniture to boarding schools and whilst they offer their own range to suit most situations, they are also able to make up items to a non-standard design. DFE Broadsheet 31 1994, 'Educational Furniture Database Setting the Standards' (see Bibliography), discusses testing and standards for common items of school furniture and lists a number of manufacturers whose products have passed these tests. Schools will, of course, need to have careful regard to value for money when making decisions about the purchase of furniture.

Finishes

5.30 Finishes should be as comparable as possible to those found in a domestic situation although, because of the intensity of use, they need to be more robust but without detracting from the overall quality of the environment. Robustness and cost effectiveness are not necessarily inconsistent with finishes that contribute to noise reduction.

Maintenance

5.31 It is recommended that procedures are in place to ensure that any damage to the building or its contents is repaired immediately, as experience indicates this is likely to prevent further damage occuring.

5.32 Services have been found to be particularly vulnerable to damage with both excessive use e.g. leaving taps and showers running and on occasions deliberate misuse e.g. 'fiddling' with controls.

Section 6: Preparing and Agreeing the Brief

The detailed responsibility for drawing up a brief and working with the architect is often placed with a senior member of the house staff, albeit with the involvement of the bursar and with a steer from the head-teacher and governors or proprietors.

6.1 Whilst some small boarding schools may be purpose-built, many building projects involve remodelling or extending existing buildings. Although there is considerable variety, existing boarding houses fall into two main categories, each having their own characteristics with strengths and weaknesses from the point of view of creating an appropriate environment.

6.2 First, there is the older house, usually Georgian or Victorian, usually converted to some extent. Second, is purpose-built accommodation, usually built within the last thirty or so years.

6.3 Older houses are often rambling, and difficult to heat. Spaces tend to be large, often resulting in dormitories for twelve or more. However, because many of the rooms are high there is a feeling of spaciousness and light, the main circulation spaces and social and recreation rooms may be spacious, and the buildings often have a considerable amount of period charm. In addition, the grounds are often very generous, with mature landscaping, allowing, for example, room for animals to be kept, vegetables to be grown and space for relaxation and informal play activities.

6.4 Modern, purpose-built accommodation is usually more compact and easier to heat, maintain and to supervise. However the design of spaces with a close fit to a particular brief means that there may be little flexibility as different uses evolve. Sometimes storage needs have been underestimated, creating significant practical problems.

6.5 Whether a project involves a new building or remodelling or extending an existing one, the requirements for those with disabilities must always be taken into consideration.

6.6 Projects are often one-off and the client may have little or no past experience to draw on. Sometimes more building is proposed when it might be more effective to make use of existing accommodation by reorganising the use of space and/or by remodelling.

6.7 It is good practice for a school to maintain a long-term (fifteen to twenty year) strategic plan, including building implications. Before any building project is considered there should be a clear idea about the organisation that the school wants. There are likely to be different ways that the buildings influence this, and alternative planning solutions should be evaluated against clear objectives. This means that when compromises have to be made they are likely to be well informed ones. It is sometimes surprising what is possible with ingenuity.

6.8 Consultants may not have had much experience of designing boarding accommodation. A short series of joint visits to other schools when boarders are in residence is likely to be time well spent, and afford an opportunity to learn from others' successes and mistakes. They provide a useful point of reference for discussion, for example on overall area standards, room sizes and inter-relationships, the standard of finishes, choice of furniture, fittings and security. As already mentioned in Paragraph 4.8 it is particularly important to consult widely when designing for special needs. It is suggested that the list of publications on the design of schools by Architects and Building Branch, DfEE, is obtained (see Bibliography). In general these deal with teaching accommodation only, but some are relevant to boarding accommodation also.

6.9 It is strongly recommended that schools become familiar with the sizes of spaces being considered by finding similar sized known spaces or by marking them out. If a project involves a repetitive unit, such as a study-bedroom, it is worth considering constructing a mock-up, with the furniture in place, to ensure that the final result will be exactly what is wanted. Boarders can, with advantage, be involved in the evaluation of this and in discussion of the proposals generally. In existing buildings there may be areas that boarders dislike because they are known to be where bullying and other forms of abuse take place. They can be asked to identify these and it may be possible to redesign them as part of a remodelling or extension project.

6.10 The responsibility for choosing and supplying the furniture should be clarified at an early stage. Furniture layouts, whether done by the architect or the furniture supplier, should be part of the design and planning process. This is so that spaces are the correct size and proportion, and that details like door positions and swings, position of lights, power points, radiators, shelving and cupboards are properly considered. It is usual for the designer to seek the client's written agreement to sketch plans after which the design is effectively 'frozen'. Wise clients will therefore ensure that they fully understand what is being proposed at this stage.

6.11 It should be borne in mind that when a new project is completed the user must ensure its continuing conformity with statutory requirements. The checklist sets out the points to consider for all those involved in briefing and designing boarding accommodation. This might also be useful for those responsible for managing boarding accommodation, in order that continuing expenditure on maintenance of buildings and equipment is effectively directed.

Section 7: Summary

There have been significant changes in recent years in the nature of the provision thought acceptable and appropriate for children who board. These changes have implications for accommodation.

7.1 There are three changes that are particularly significant.

- First, a greater concern about children's welfare, both that they are well cared for pastorally, and that they are protected from risk of harm.

- Second, a wish by parents that children of both genders should have a boarding environment that is home-like in character, provides surroundings that are physically comfortable; well maintained; visually attractive and that offers a space that is semi-private to each child and can be personalised by them.

- Third, special schools now have a population with more severe or complex special educational needs, for which many buildings no longer make adequate provision.

7.2 The issues raised in this guidance are varied and complex, and a degree of compromise is required when briefing, planning and designing boarding accommodation. This is particularly the case when balancing the need for privacy against that for supervision, taking into account the variations in circumstances and ages of the boarders.

7.3 Although new boarding accommodation is built from time to time, most of the buildings that will form the bulk of the boarding stock for many years to come already exist. The buildings are varied in terms of age, character, location and setting. Such accommodation will have certain limitations and, perhaps, interesting potential. Nevertheless, remodelling, however imaginatively and generously it is carried out, is likely to require some compromises compared with a new building.

7.4 This guidance is based on observations of good practice, and gives practical information and examples of accommodation for meeting these needs. Its purpose is to encourage informed decisions to be made by those responsible for briefing, designing and managing boarding accommodation.

Check List: Briefing and Designing Boarding Accommodation

1 General Considerations

1.1 Fundamental questions

a. Does the school have detailed records and plans of the existing accommodation?

b. Has the school a long term development plan in terms of any change in nature or organisation?

c. Could better use be made of existing buildings by reorganisation and/or remodelling, or is new accommodation necessary?

d. Are any buildings listed or subject to other restrictions? If so does this affect the options available?

1.2 Site planning

a. Has consideration been given to the long term developments and how these may affect the site?

b. If additional facilities need to be provided in the future, can this be done conveniently?

c. Have any legal restrictions, such as rights of way and town planning constraints, been established?

d. Is any proposed new building conveniently sited for pedestrian and vehicular circulation and for safety and security?

e. Has consideration been given to overall site security to ensure that there is protection against any inherent hazards (e.g. public road, river frontage) and against intruders?

1.3 Boarding house organisation

a. What are the preferred house numbers and age ranges?

b. If relevant, are houses to be single or mixed gender?

c. Have other patterns of organisation that might be adopted in the future been considered, e.g. changing from single gender to mixed gender, or vice versa; changing the organisation of the age groups?

d. Is the boarding accommodation intended to be self-sufficient, or is it anticipated that boarders will rely on using some of the school accommodation, e.g. for meals, study and recreation outside school hours?

e. What are the preferred sleeping group sizes, taking into account the boarders' ages?

f. Will the sleeping groups be vertically or horizontally grouped in terms of age?

g. To what extent is sleeping, sanitary, social and recreational accommodation to be separated by age.

h. How is separation by gender going to be organised and will there be quiet social areas for each gender?

j. How is provision for study organised and what is the implication for supervision?

k. How will the older boarders be given a greater degree of independence and more opportunity to develop life skills?

l. If only a small number of the total numbers of boarders will remain at weekends, has thought been given to how to provide for them without their having to change bedrooms for the weekends?

m. What relationship is sought between the residential and sleeping in staff accommodation and boarders' accommodation?

n. If it is intended to use the accommodation for holiday lettings at any stage, have the implications been considered?

1.4 Circulation

a. Is the entrance to the boarding accommodation attractive and welcoming?

b. Can visitors reach the public areas easily, and without intruding on the privacy of boarders?

c. Has the need to minimise areas that might encourage bullying, abuse or substance abuse been taken into account?

d. Have the requirements of access for those with difficulties been met?

e. Are the circulation routes for materials used in the every day running of the boarding house direct, adequate in size and free of danger spots?

f. Has the local fire authority been consulted at an early stage?

2 The Main Accommodation

2.1 Sleeping

a. Do the sleeping areas provide privacy and a place that has a sense of being personal to the occupant, i.e. defined area adjacent to the bed for use by occupant only, personal storage adjacent to the bed area?

b. Are beds at least 0.9m apart, even if there is a low screen separating two beds?

c. Is it possible to personalise sleeping areas, e.g. with posters, photographs, plants, toys and mascots?

d. Is there adequate storage for personal belongings, including shelves and some lockable storage?

e. Is there room to socialize in small groups in, or adjacent to, bedrooms? In mixed houses are the latter single gender?

f. Are sleeping and associated areas personal to those who sleep in them, and not used by day boarders, e.g. for changing?

g. In existing accommodation how are areas such as large dormitories going to be remodelled into smaller bedrooms? Have any limitations such as listed status been taken into account?

2.2 Sanitary accommodation

a. Does the provision of sanitary fittings comply with SPRs, including separate provision for boarders and staff, and for boys and girls in mixed houses?

b. Do all showers, baths and changing areas around them, and WCs have privacy in use, i.e. full height partitions, lockable full height doors for WCs and baths, curtains for showers and no more than 1 WC, bath or shower per room or cubicle?

c. Do all showers and surrounding areas have properly designed non-slip surfaces and adequate drainage? Does the design prevent the spread of water to other areas?

d. Are there appropriate hand drying facilities?

e. Is there hygienic storage for tooth brushes, flannels and towels, including arrangements for drying towels which are wet after use?

f. Is there appropriate provision for sanitary towel disposal?

g. Are WCs provided for the use of adult visitors of both genders?

h. In a single gender house is there appropriate WC provision for use by visitors, i.e. arranged so that there is no need for a young person to use a staff WC or that provided for the opposite gender?

2.3 Personal care

a. Are there facilities for older boarders to wash, dry and iron small items of clothing?

b. Is there provision for boarders to wash and dry their hair?

c. Are there sufficient mirrors available?

d. Are there arrangements for boarders to purchase personal items, stationery and snacks?

2.4 Social and recreation

a. Is there an area central in the house but near the recreation spaces, which is easy to move in and out of, where boarders can meet on a planned or unplanned basis before moving on to other activities?

b. Is there a choice of social and recreation areas for boarders to go to?

c. Is there a quiet social area with a living room atmosphere where boarders can sit and read, chat or play quiet games?

d. Are there sufficient social areas for the age range to be appropriately catered for?

e. If the house is mixed gender, are there spaces of the type described in b. where boarders can gather in single gender groups as well as in mixed groups?

f. Is there somewhere where boarders can play physically active games such as table tennis/ping-pong, snooker, pool and table football?

g. Is there provision for watching TV and video?

h. Is there somewhere that practical hobbies (e.g. those involving the use of paint, glue and fabrics) can be pursued and projects left out?

j. Is there a quiet space or area which has books and other resources?

k. Are there sufficient telephones for the needs of pupils?

l. Can boarders have a private conversation without being overheard or interrupted?

m. Are there sufficient places that provide opportunities for a private chat among boarders and between boarders and staff, both on a planned and unplanned basis?

n. Do these have a reasonable degree of casual supervision to prevent misuse of the privacy?

o. Is there a place that can be used for private discussions and meetings?

p. Is there somewhere that the whole house can meet?

2.5 Study

a. Do boarders have somewhere to study appropriate to their age and needs?

b. Do all boarders, regardless of their age and type of courses being followed, have a table or worktop in their sleeping area?

c. Do boarders have somewhere to continue studying after formal prep time, including late in the evening and before breakfast?

d. Is there access to sufficient resources to support study and associated activities such as research?

e. Has consideration been given to the use of IT in the boarding house, and to any future developments in this area?

2.6 Provision for meals

a. Can boarders have a meal with adults in a homely environment at least once a day, and at weekends?

b. Is there sufficient space for orderly queuing, indoors with appropriate supervision?

c. Has thought been given to ameliorating the effect of noise in dining areas?

d. Has the location and design of kitchens been discussed with the local fire authority at an early stage?

2.7 Medical Care

a. Is there somewhere to store a first-aid kit so that it is easily available in an emergency?

b. Is there secure storage for medication in a lockable cupboard? Has consideration been given to this being in a locked room?

c. Have arrangements for the issue of medication been taken into account?

d. Does provision for unwell boarders comply with the SPRs?

e. Do sick rooms and any isolation rooms have storage for clothes and personal belongings and are they furnished in a way that allows for reading in bed and writing and drawing at a table or worktop?

f. Is there access to a telephone, with appropriate privacy?

g. Have any special needs been provided for?

2.8 Outdoor activities

a. Is there an area associated with the entrance to the house where the boarders can gather, wait, or just sit and watch the world go by?

b. Are there opportunities to relax outside and for outdoor social activities, e.g. barbecues?

c. Is there age-appropriate provision for outdoor games and other physical activities either associated with the house or elsewhere on the school site?

d. Is any equipment safe, and are the outdoor surfaces appropriate, bearing in mind safety considerations?

3 Ancillary Accommodation

3.1 Snacks and drinks

a. Is there provision for having a hot drink at bedtime?

b. Can boarders make drinks and snacks as appropriate to their age?

c. Is there satisfactory storage for fresh food associated with b?

d. Is there appropriate provision for eating snacks?

e. Is there a hygienic supply of drinking water?

3.2 Laundry

a. Have arrangements for collecting and distributing both clean and dirty clothes and bed linen been thought through?

b. Have arrangements for the sensitive management of bedwetting problems been taken into account?

3.3 Storage

a. Is there sufficient appropriate storage and drying facilities for outdoor clothing, footwear and sportswear?

b. Is there sufficient storage for personal and house sports equipment?

c. Is there sufficient storage for trunks and suitcases, and is this appropriately located in the light of the pattern of use?

d. Is there appropriate secure storage for all cleaning materials, including any bleaches, disinfectants, and any hazardous substances?

4 Special Educational Needs

4.1 General

All the points made elsewhere also apply in the special needs situation. However, there are some additional considerations;

First - for some boarders with special educational needs the boarding house will be their home all the year round, so it is particularly important that the environment is homely and comfortable.

Second - many of the boarders with more severe difficulties will have a particular need for opportunities to develop life skills and independence in preparation for their life when they leave school.

Third - there are practical issues depending on the type of need and it should be borne in mind that many such boarders will have a mixture of needs.

a. Is the accommodation appropriate to chronological age?

b. Are there opportunities for boarders to learn life skills?

c. Are there opportunities for older boarders to develop independence?

d. Has the need for night-time supervision been taken into account, including the possible need for waking night staff?

e. Does the sanitary accommodation provide privacy and dignity for the users and encourage independence?

f. Has sufficient provision been made for telephone calls to be made and received in private, with adaptations as appropriate for those using it?

g. Is there appropriate storage for specialist aids and equipment including items needed for hygiene?

4.2 Hearing impairment

a. Has consideration been given to ensuring that the lighting conditions facilitate lip reading?

b. Have measures been taken to reduce background noise by use of absorbent surfaces?

c. Has consideration been given to visual methods of giving a fire alarm? Is the telephone provision suitable for their use?

4.3 Visual impairment

a. Has consideration been given to ensuring appropriate lighting and the contrast of colour, tone and texture on wall and floor surfaces?

b. Has consideration been given to identifying the position of switches and sockets in a tactile way, and to locating them consistently?

4.4 Emotional and behavioural difficulties

a. Has the need for robust finishes and furniture been considered?

b. Has consideration been given to the higher level of supervision required?

c. Is there provision for the greater need of formal and informal counselling in appropriately designed and located spaces?

4.5 Severe learning difficulties, including challenging behaviour

a. Is there sufficient protection to prevent boarders damaging themselves or others?

b. Is there sufficient protection to the fabric of the building and equipment to prevent damage?

c. Are finishes and furniture, particularly in bedrooms and bathrooms, easy to clean?

d. Is furniture sufficiently robust to withstand likely treatment?

e. Are TV and video equipment physically protected even while in use, e.g. behind a polycarbonate screen where this is necessary?

f. Are the doors and windows sufficiently secure to prevent boarders leaving buildings unsupervised, where this is necessary?

4.6 Physical difficulties

a. Are all parts of the boarding house used by children accessible by wheelchairs and other mobility aids?

b. Have the fire escape arrangements been fully thought out and agreed with the local fire service, including implications for night time emergencies and wheelchair storage?

c. Is there sufficient storage for wheelchairs and other mobility aids, both centrally and associated with sleeping areas?

d. Is there appropriately sized and positioned provision for charging wheelchair batteries?

e. Are finishes, furniture and fittings resistant to accidental impact?

f. Are bedrooms large enough to allow for friends in wheelchairs to meet?

g. Are furniture and fittings, including any wash-hand basin, suitable for the users, bearing in mind wheelchair users and other mobility aids?

h. Has the need for space for hoists, both permanent and portable, been considered in bedrooms and bathrooms?

j. Does the sanitary accommodation allow for adult assistance whilst providing appropriate privacy and dignity?

k. Are the sanitary fittings, including controls suitable for the users?

l. Are there appropriate alarm systems in the sanitary accommodation?

m. Do WC doors open outwards?

n. Can lockable doors be opened from outside in an emergency?

o. Are the social, recreation and study areas large enough to accommodate those using wheelchairs and other mobility aids?

p. Are the furniture, fittings and equipment in social, recreation and study areas appropriate in general design and height?

q. Is there adequate storage for computers and other electronic communication aids?

5 Finishes, Furniture and Fittings

5.1 Finishes

This is an area in which a degree of compromise is usually necessary. There will be a different emphasis in each type of space. The compromise is between having finishes that are robust enough to stand up to the heavy use that occurs in any residential situation and the need to maintain the overall quality of the environment. It is worth bearing in mind that careful consideration and targeting expenditure on finishes is invariably time and money well spent, as it can both save in cleaning and maintenance and optimise the life of the finishes.

5.2 Furniture and fittings

The same comments that have been made about finishes apply to the selection of furniture and fittings.

a. Are the furniture and fittings appropriately sized for the users? Building Bulletin 62, 'Body dimensions of the

school population', gives body measurements of 3-18 year olds (see Bibliography).

b. Have the recommended standards for wear, resistance and structural stability been met?

c. Has thought been given to providing dado rails to protect wall finishes from damage by furniture?

5.3 The character of spaces

a. Has consideration been given to the overall character of rooms in terms of scale, proportion and use of colour, texture and lighting to create an environment appropriate for living in?

b. Are there ample opportunities for both two dimensional and three dimensional displays?

6 Environmental Design

6.1 Heating and ventilation

a. Has the heating and ventilation been provided in an integrated way, with particular attention to bedrooms, sanitary accommodation and drying rooms?

b. In existing buildings have ways of improving the heating system, such as insulation and heating controls, been examined?

c. Are opening windows safe in use for boarders, secure against intruders, and do they meet any requirements of the fire authority for escape ?

d. Have the requirements of any boarders with special needs been considered, in particular those with sensory and physical impairments?

6.2 Lighting and power

a. Is there appropriate lighting in bedrooms, both for studying and for reading in bed?

b. Are other areas used for study provided with appropriate lighting?

c. Have the requirements for night time lighting been met, e.g. between bedrooms and sanitary accommodation, and bedrooms and staff base in case of emergency, and for night time supervision by waking staff in special schools?

d. Are there sufficient power points for present needs and possible future developments, to avoid overloading or the need to use trailing leads?

e. Have the specialist needs, both at present and for possible future developments, for wiring and earthing computers been considered?

f. Is there appropriate lighting of escape routes?

g. Is there appropriate external security lighting both for occupants and against intruders?

h. Where electric wheelchairs are in use, is there appropriate provision for battery charging?

j. Has consideration been given to consistency in positioning suitable socket outlets and switches, in particular for boarders with sensory impairment?

6.3 Energy conservation

a. Has the guidance available on energy consumption for both new and existing buildings been followed, and in particular, if an existing building, has an energy audit been carried out; if a new building, has the design energy target been calculated?

b. Will the users be made aware of good practice in managing energy conservation?

6.4 Communication systems

a. Is there provision for making and receiving telephone calls in privacy, and do all telephones have an appropriate privacy?

b. Are there any implications of future developments in IT that need to be considered?

c. If there are pupils with physical impairments, is there an alarm call system in WCs, showers and bath?

d. If there are boarders with special needs, is an alarm or detector system needed during the night?

6.5 Acoustics

a. Has acoustic separation between different areas of the house, e.g. staff accommodation and the main boarding house, been considered?

b. Has the acoustic performance of noisy spaces, especially those with hard finishes such as recreation rooms and dining rooms, been considered?

c. In particular has the use of carpet both to reduce noise and enhance the environment been considered in bedrooms, quiet areas and corridors?

6.6 Security

a. Is there appropriate security to all possible entry points of the boarding houses?

b. Has the security of the front door been considered, and is there a need for an entry phone or mechanical or electrical keypad codelock?

c. Is there a requirement to prevent boarders leaving the house without permission?

d. Does the site have appropriate security, both protective and against intruders?

e. Is there a requirement to prevent boarders leaving the site without supervision?

6.7 Hazardous substances

a. Has a risk assessment been carried out as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work (MHSW) Regulations 1992?

b. Has refuse disposal, particularly the disposal of 'yellow bag' waste requiring separate hygienic disposal, been considered?

7 Health and Safety

a. Have those in the school responsible for health and safety, and if an LEA-maintained school, the local authority liaison officer, been consulted about the design?.

b. Has the design been discussed with the environmental health officer and building control officer?

c. Have the requirements of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Wel-fare) Regulations 1992 (see Bibliography) and associated Code of Practice been considered?

8 Fire Safety Aspects

a. Have the requirements of Part B of the Building Regulations been taken into account?

b. Has the design been discussed with the local fire authority at an early stage?

9 The Building in Use

a. Is it proposed to prepare a user manual setting out good practice for the care and maintenance of the boarding accommodation?

b. It must be remembered that the SPRs apply to the accommodation in use, including any changes, not solely to the original design.

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Contact: CIBSE, Delta House, 22 Balham High Road, London SW12 9BS

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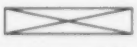
KEY TO SYMBOLS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(various sizes)

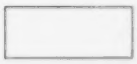
=BED
2mx900mm zone

=DOUBLE DOOR WARDROBE
900x600mm

=SINGLE DOOR WARDROBE
600x600mm

=BEDSIDE CABINET AND SHELF
500x500mm

=BEDSIDE CABINET
500x500mm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=UPHOLSTERED CHAIR

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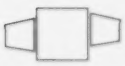
900X900mm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600X600mm

=TABLE AND CHAIR
1200X600mm

=TABLE AND CHAIR
900X600mm

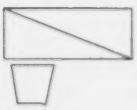
=PLAY ZONE

=SLIDING DOOR

=WASH HAND BASIN SET IN ADJ'LE
HEIGHT WORK SURFACE

=BEDSIDE CABINET
WITH SLIDING DOORS

=DOUBLE DOOR WARDROBE
WITH SLIDING DOORS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WITH CHAIR
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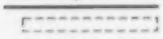
=WHEELCHAIR TURNING ZONE
1500mm DIA

= WINDOW WITH BLIND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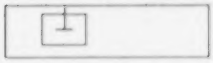
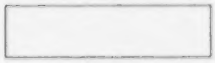
=WASH HAND BASIN

=PINBOARD

=SINGLE COMPUTER TABLE
750x750mm


=WORKTOP AND INSET SINK

=FILING CABINET


=WORKTOP
600mm deep

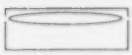
=WALL CUPBOARD

=LOW LIBRARY SHELVING

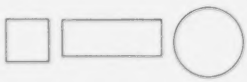
=HIGH LIBRARY SHELVING

=MAGAZINE RACKING

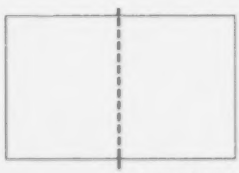
=EASY CHAIR

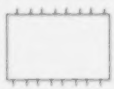

= UPHOLSTERED SOFA

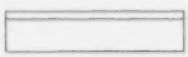
=UPHOLSTERED BENCH SEATING
seat 350mm deep


=COFFEE TABLES
(various sizes)

=TELEVISION


=PING PONG TABLE


=TABLE FOOTBALL


=NON UPHOLSTERED BENCHING
350mm deep

=TELEPHONE IN BOOTH

This building bulletin gives non-statutory guidance on the provision of school boarding accommodation. Based on observations of good practice, it gives practical advice and illustrates examples that reflect changes in provision thought acceptable and appropriate, including:

- growing concern about children's welfare
- trends towards a more home-like environment
- the changing population in special schools

The issues raised are varied and complex, and a degree of compromise will be required when briefing, planning and designing boarding accommodation. This bulletin aims to inform the way decisions are made.

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